

Ben Gold Replies to Thurman Arnold *(Turn to page 3)*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS

May 14, 1940

Big Pirates, Big Navies

Major Allen Johnson

A Congress without Jim Crow

Ralph Ellison

New Fronts against Cancer

Harold Ward

The American White Paper

Bruce Minton

GROPPER, RICHTER, JOHNSON, SORIANO, MARTIN

Between Ourselves

THE strong men keep coming on, Carl Sandburg sang long ago and he said it in *The People*, Yes like nobody since Whitman. You can bamboozle them into wars and the days of the big killings are upon us. Those days have come and gone before but Sandburg's people have a way of weathering anything, with that dream in their heads of a time when the wars will stop forever. And after long, bloody centuries their dream has come to life in one land upon the globe, and more to come. Forgive this little lyrical excursion but we couldn't help it after we got this note from a Mr. and Mrs. H. E. of Washington, D. C. Just a couple of people we don't know anything about except that they are the heroes of Sandburg's songs. Listen to their letter:

"Because we're going to have a baby, we're enclosing some cash for NM. We want to keep a magazine like yours going strong so he or she will have some honest ABC's to

start out on. It's a hell of a time to have a kid—but it's your kind that gives us courage enough to face the future. . . . If you have to skip cartoons again, we'll raid the baby's bank and send in some more cash."

How would you feel if you got a letter like that? Well, we felt the same way. And Mr. and Mrs. H. E. are not alone: we've had stacks of mail about the war these last three weeks. The folk are awakening to the realization that our amiable President has girded his loins to lead us to the fray. The letters indicate that FDR has made up his mind to save the British empire from the quagmire. They feel, too, that though the doddering Chamberlain is not precisely a genius, neither is he a total fool. All the talk about the losses and defeats of the Norwegian campaign oddly add up to greasing the way for loans, munitions, and finally, our good, hardy manpower. That's how our correspondents feel, but they don't stop at that. They're not fatalists, thank God, and they mean to put in their licks about it. In a future issue we will print a good many of these letters plus some editorial comment. Meanwhile, we're furthering the great debate of our times by sponsoring a symposium on "Can America Stay out of War?"

We've invited some outstanding political commentators to present their views Wednesday evening, May 15, at Mecca Temple, in New York. The speakers will be George Soule, widely known for many years as an editor of the *New Republic*; Quincy Howe, who talks on European affairs over the radio in New York and is author of the book, *England Expects Every American to Do His Duty*; Clarence Hathaway, editor of the *Daily Worker*. Corliss Lamont, whose article in NM last week, "Reasons for Optimism," has already occasioned widespread comment, will be chairman. A panel discussion of other prominent speakers will follow. We're only sorry all our friends west of the Hudson can't come to the affair; everybody we know this side of it is. (Turn to the back cover.)

The war's playing hell with a lot of people's plans and some of them don't hold up as well as Mr. and Mrs. H. E. We got this poignant note from a Chicago map concern this week: "We are sorry to have to discontinue this magazine but the very unsettled condition of the world has hit the map business quite hard so that we must retrench on some of our expenses." They hope that when "conditions are favorably settled and the world map will remain the same and we can print an edition, that we

will be able to renew this subscription." Our sympathies go out to the mapmakers who "can't get out an edition," but we plan to keep right on going getting out editions every week.

Two NM contributors, Earl Browder and Paul Novick, will speak at a meeting in Madison Square Garden Saturday, May 11, at 7:30 p.m., to celebrate the eighteenth anniversary of the Jewish *Morning Freiheit*. The meeting will also be in the nature of a mass greeting to Novick who was recently elected editor in chief of the *Morning Freiheit*, succeeding the late Moissaye J. Olgin.

Who's Who

RALPH ELLISON, who has written articles and reviews for NM before, is a young Negro writer. . . . Isidor Schneider is former literary editor of NM and author of *From the Kingdom of Necessity*. . . . Harold Ward is a writer on scientific subjects and a contributor to many magazines. . . . Maj. Allen Johnson was an officer of the 15th International Brigade during the Spanish war. . . . Eli Jaffe is a newspaperman living in Oklahoma City. He has contributed to NM before. . . . Adam Lapin is NM and *Daily Worker* correspondent in Washing-

ton. . . . Bruce Minton is co-author with John Stuart of *Men Who Lead Labor* and a forthcoming book, *The Fat Years and the Lean*. . . . Corliss Lamont, a member of the editorial council of *Soviet Russia Today*, is author of *You Might Like Socialism* and a philosophical work, *The Illusion of Immortality*. . . . Alfred J. Brenner is a young short story writer who has contributed several book reviews to NM. . . . Wilma Shore is a young short story writer.

Flashbacks

MEMO to Norman Thomas who is currently being praised with faint damns by Father Coughlin (copy to Henry Ford): On May 11, 1937, the United States Ambassador to Germany, William E. Dodd, in a letter to Sen. Robert Bulkley of Ohio, stated that a certain American billionaire was ready to back a dictator in this country. . . . And lest we forget that our government can be guilty of aggression and imperialist conquest: on May 13, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. . . . Incidentally, this week marks the second anniversary of the administration's \$1,156,000,000 naval expansion bill which passed Congress May 13, 1938.



Ben Gold

Ben Gold, whose story of the employer-government conspiracy to destroy his union appears in this issue, has been a valiant symbol among fur workers for the past twenty-five years. From the secretaryship of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union he became, in 1935, manager of the Furriers Joint Council. Twice elected to the presidency of the International Fur and Leather Workers Union, he has been in the forefront of the CIO movement. His organization is a model of progressive trade-unionism.

This Week

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXXV, NO. 8

May 14, 1940

Ben Gold Tells the Furriers' Story by Ben Gold	3
A Congress Jim Crow Didn't Attend by Ralph Ellison	5
Auguries A Poem by Isidor Schneider	8
New Fronts against Cancer by Harold Ward	9
Big Navies for Big Pirates by Major Allen Johnson	11
Gropper's Cartoon	14
The Farms Blew Away by Eli Jaffe	15
FDR Signs the Treaty of Uvalde by Adam Lapin	17
Readers' Forum	22

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The American White Paper by Bruce Minton	23
Education of a Liberal by Corliss Lamont	24
Drama Source Book by Alvah Bessie	25
Looking Backward by Alfred J. Brenner	25

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Behind the Mannerheim Line by Alvah Bessie	27
"My Favorite Wife" by James Dugan	27
Mimes and Masks by Francis Steuben	28
Young America Paints by Wilma Shore	30
Art work by Crockett Johnson, Charles Martin, Mischa Richter, Soriano.	

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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Ben Gold Tells the Furriers' Story

The labor leader gives the lowdown. Documentary proof of a federal conspiracy endangering all American workmen. Gold's crime: "The entire industry was unionized . . ."

THE Sherman Anti-Trust Law—enacted fifty years ago for the avowed purpose of protecting the people from the octopuses known as combines, monopolies, and trusts—is at last being invoked by the so-called "New Deal" Roosevelt administration. But not against trusts. Not for the protection of the people. It is being employed by the administration *against the people*—and in behalf of the economic royalists once labeled public enemy No. 1 by the same administration.

Liberal reforms for "the forgotten man" are memories. They have been replaced by attacks upon labor and its organizations under the anti-trust law—a law which could now be appropriately renamed the "Roosevelt Anti-Union Law." It is under this law that I and ten of my associates in the International Fur and Leather Workers Union have been given jail terms and heavy fines.

District Attorney Henderson, sent from the Anti-Trust Division of the Department of Justice as chief prosecutor against the fur workers' union, expressed the attitude of the government:

Since it has been proven without contradiction that the persons controlling this union aimed to prevent New Jersey dressers from doing business with New York dealers and New York manufacturers except upon terms satisfactory and agreeable to this union, the court should have charged that a conspiracy existed to restrain trade.

What kind of "conspiracy" was it, and what methods did the union employ to "restrain trade"? A few remarks of the judge complete the picture. In the course of the discussion Judge Bondy stated "that there was a strike" and "what they [the union leaders] wanted to do is: they wanted to unionize Hollander and the whole industry." The judge also made the following statement:

I will now tell you that I have held these defendants on this theory: that I believe there is evidence in the record, on which the jury has to pass, that in 1931 there was a conspiracy to unionize the entire industry, which conspiracy might have included the dyers and dressers in New Jersey. If in 1931 the jury finds that was the conspiracy, the agreement that they were going to industrialize the whole union, including the dyers and dressmakers in New Jersey, whom the courts have held to be engaged in interstate commerce, then the fact that they started only local strikes becomes a relevant fact as an act which they undertook to carry out in their conspiracy. I will also state that the operation of the court's mind is that

the wrong is done when the combination is formed, and the day the combination is formed they need not perpetrate the act on interstate commerce. If they never did a thing, if they formed a combination, that would be sufficient.

In his closing address to the jury the prosecutor argued that the best proof that there was a conspiracy to unionize the industry was the fact that *the conspiracy was successful, and the entire industry was unionized*. What a crime! The policy outlined by Henderson goes even further in undermining labor's rights than did the letter of Thurman Arnold, assistant attorney general in charge of the Anti-Trust Division, to the Indianapolis AFL Central Labor Union several months ago. Arnold publicly told the labor movement that trade unions may be prosecuted for the following practices only:

1. Unreasonable restraints to prevent the use of cheaper material, improved equipment, or more efficient methods.
2. Unreasonable restraint designed to compel the hiring of useless and unnecessary labor.
3. Unreasonable restraint designed to enforce a system of graft and extortion.
4. Unreasonable restraint designed to enforce illegally fixed prices.
5. Unreasonable restraint designed to destroy an established and legitimate system of collective bargaining.

None of these practices was charged against the fur workers. The only issue—as stated by the district attorney and the judge—was the strikes which the union conducted to organize open shops, to secure higher wages, shorter hours, and collective bargaining. That was our only crime—the crime for which we were prosecuted, found guilty, and sentenced to one year in jail and heavy fine.

The procedure and outcome of the first of the trials against trade unions for violation of the Sherman act (scores of indictments against other unions have also been made) reveal that this "anti-trust" crusade is part of a far-reaching program of the administration.

The International Fur and Leather Workers Union is in possession of a document which supplies ample proof that the Sherman act is being used by the administration for the express purpose of placing the government apparatus at the disposal of the bosses. That is why the seven-year-old indictment against the fur workers' union was revived. The document published here reveals the substance

of the collusion between the government and the employers against our union.

Until recently, employers utilized their gangs of organized racketeers and gunmen against the union. In the fur industry union leaders refused to "cooperate" with racket-employers. As a result our young and able organizer, Morris Langer, was killed by gunmen in 1933. The gang threatened to get other "stubborn" and "unapproachable" union officials in like manner. At that time the government did not have to use the Sherman act against unions. Employers did not require open government interference. The Lepke-Gurrah gang and other murder mobs did the job for labor-hating employers.

But at present, the bosses have a serious problem. Their rackets and strong-arm gangs are busted. (It is a well known fact that the fur workers contributed a great deal to breaking up the underworld rackets.) Hence, the government deems it necessary to step into the situation and carry out the program of the economic royalists in a "legal" manner. This is also designed to eliminate the most effective obstacle to the administration's pro-war policy.

Evading the real issue is an old "legal" device. In this case, the tactic of evasion is employed to its maximum by the authorities. Legal minds and learned federal judges have taken apart every sentence and every word written into the Sherman act, and have performed astonishing miracles of "interpretation." They raise all kinds of questions, build up all kinds of theories. Must the restraint of interstate commerce be absolute or substantial? Or is any restraint sufficient to constitute a violation of the Sherman act? Is any action which affects interstate commerce equivalent to *actual* restraint? Is there a difference between reasonable and unreasonable agreement to restrain trade? Is there a difference between a finished product, a commodity already circulating in interstate commerce, and raw material in process of becoming a commodity intended for interstate commerce, etc., etc.

These legal profundities deliberately get off the main road in order to lose it. Very skillfully they involve themselves in a vicious circle of learned hairsplitting which has nothing in common with the real issue. There are many trees, but the forest is nowhere to be seen.

The fundamental issue was and still is whether or not workers have the right to

organize, to agree among themselves not to work, to strike, until their disputes with the employers are settled. Meeting the issue squarely, a strike on the part of workers is intended to and does affect trade—intrastate as well as interstate. In the present period of industrial development and mass production, with trustified capital and a financial oli-

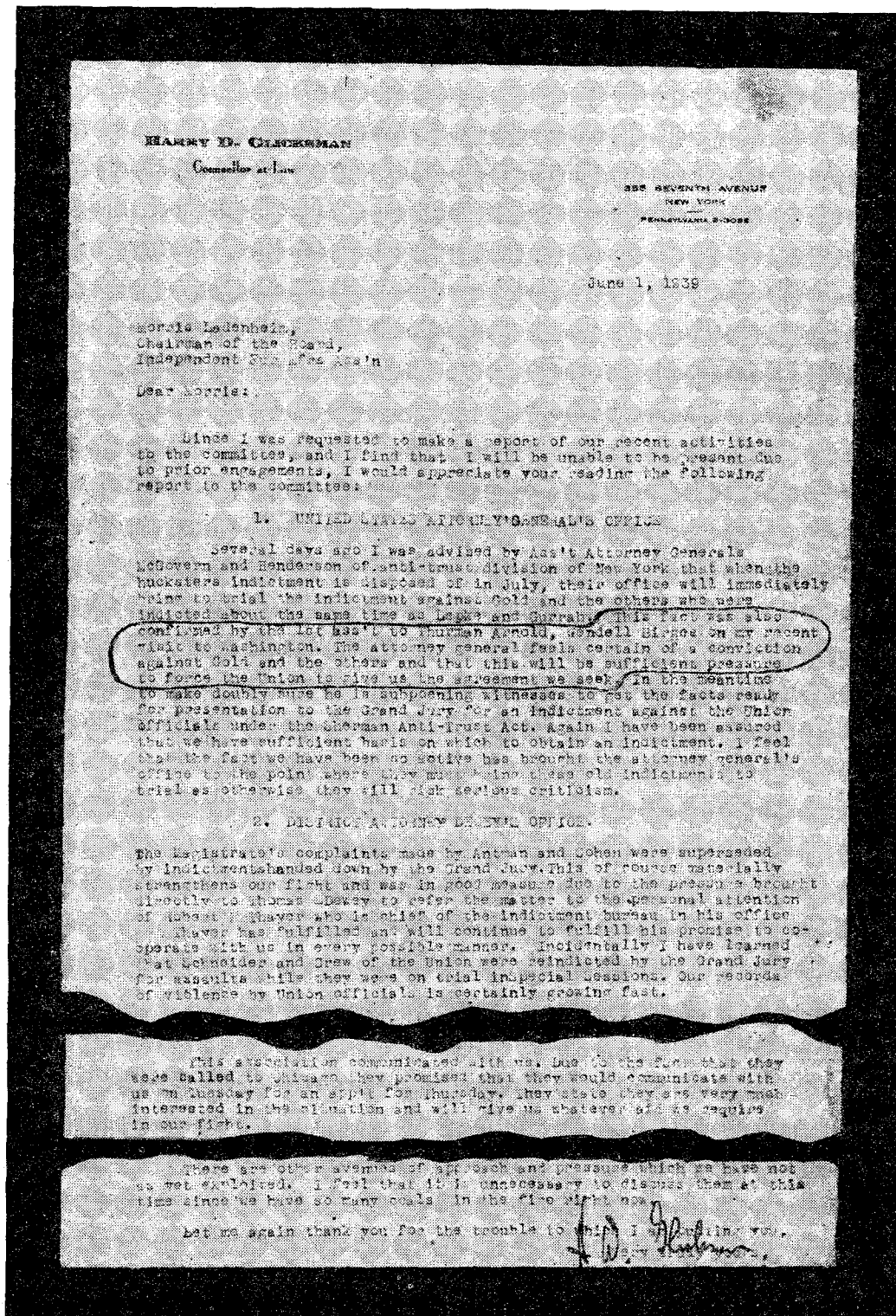
garchy dominating and controlling every phase of production, transportation, and distribution throughout the country as well as the world markets, it is nonsense to try to set up artificial boundaries and differentiate between intrastate and interstate production and commerce. An effective strike in the clothing industry affects interstate production and

commerce in manufacturing, in textiles, and on Southern cotton plantations. An effective strike in the leather industry affects commerce in leather, shoe, glove, saddle and harness, automobile, and many other industries throughout the country. If the Sherman Anti-Trust Law is applicable to labor unions and to the right of workers to strike, the logical conclusion is that all strikes are prohibited.

The theory of reasonable or unreasonable agreement to restrain trade—substantial or insubstantial effect upon or interference with interstate commerce—can by no stretch of the imagination be legitimately applied to labor organizations and the right of workers to strike. The right of workers to refuse to work until their disputes with employers are settled can under no circumstances be conditional, except under a forced labor program. If the right to strike is recognized only on condition that interstate commerce will not be restrained, affected, or interfered with, it means in reality that the workers are deprived of their right to strike.

On the other hand, things are quite different when for the sake of demagogic strategy the government goes through the formality of a suit against a capitalist trust. Its attitude then is decidedly benevolent. An example is the recent suit against the following companies and their officers: Underwood, Eliot Fisher Co., Royal Typewriter, Remington Rand, Inc., L. C. Smith, and Corona Typewriter Co. These companies, producing more than 95 percent of the typewriters sold in the United States, were indicted last July on charges of entering into a conspiracy to restrain trade in order to maintain high prices on typewriters and to continue their profiteering. The prosecutor in the fur workers' case, Berkeley W. Henderson, was also "prosecutor" against this typewriter trust. Mr. Henderson demanded maximum imprisonment and heavy fines against leaders of the fur workers' union and the Honorable Judge Bondy acquiesced to Mr. Henderson's desires. But in the case against the typewriter trust, none of its officers were jailed or fined. The only thing Mr. Henderson wanted was that the federal judge, Henry W. Goddard, instruct the gentlemen of the trust not to do it again. This is called a "consent" decree.

Many labor unions are already indicted under the Sherman act. No doubt many new indictments will be forthcoming. Labor and the progressive movement as a whole cannot postpone action on this basic issue. Both CIO and AFL unions will be destroyed if the verdict in the fur workers' case is allowed to stand as a precedent. Unfortunately, the Executive Council of the AFL is always slow when faced with the task of protecting the rights of labor. It has been far more aggressive in its efforts to emasculate the Wagner act. The workers themselves must wake up to the fact that their democratic rights are at stake—that the attempt to deprive labor of the right to strike is the first step of the Roosevelt government to introduce regimented control of unions. BEN GOLD.



DOCUMENTARY PROOF. This letter to the fur manufacturers' association from its lawyer is evidence of the collaboration between the Roosevelt administration and the manufacturers to decapitate the furriers' union of its leadership before destroying it altogether. Note the encircled sentences: "This fact was also confirmed by the 1st ass't to Thurman Arnold, Wendell Birges, on my recent visit to Washington. The attorney general feels certain of a conviction against Gold and the others and that this will be sufficient pressure to force the union to give us the agreement we seek." The "association" referred to in the second strip is the union-busting National Manufacturers Association which "are very much interested in the situation and will give us whatever aid we require in our fight."

A Congress Jim Crow Didn't Attend

"And there in the faces of my people I saw strength," Ralph Ellison writes of the Third National Negro Congress. Its great meaning to fifteen million Americans.

WE DROVE all night to beat the crowd. We were going to Washington to attend the Third National Negro Congress. Fog hung over the Delaware roads, over the fields and creeks, so that we could not tell water from grass, except in spots where the fog had lifted. Our headlights brought no answering reflection from the red glass disks on the road signs. Coming out of some town the driver failed to see a road marker and almost wrecked the car. It shook us awake and we talked to keep the driver alert.

Then two things happened to give the trip to the congress a sharp meaning. It was the sun that started it. It appeared beyond the fog like a flame, as though a distant farmhouse was afire. And one of the boys remembered Natchez, Miss., and began talking about it. I felt depressed. A friend of mine was from Natchez and some of the victims had his family name and I wondered if any had been his relatives. We talked about conditions down south and I hoped someone from Natchez would attend the congress, so I could hear about the fire firsthand.

Outside of Baltimore we began passing troops of cavalry. They were stretched along the highway for a mile. Young fellows in khaki with campaign hats strapped beneath their chins, jogging stiffly in their saddles. I asked one of my companions where they were going and was told that there was an army camp near by. Someone said that I would find out "soon enough" and I laughed and said that I was a black Yank and was not coming. But already the troops of cavalry were becoming linked in my mind with the Natchez fire. Where *were* the troops going? We in the car were going to the Third National Negro Congress—but what did *that* mean? Then I was aware that all five of us in the car were of army age and that just as suddenly as the troops had appeared atop the hill, we might be called to war. Here we were, young Negroes, bitter about the conditions responsible for Natchez and faced with the danger of war, heading for Washington, D. C.

I thought about the congress. I remembered that some of the Negro papers had been carrying glowing accounts of army life and of the joys of the black French soldiers. Would there be many at the congress who had succumbed to these stories? John L. Lewis had asked the support of the congress in forming a new political movement—possibly a third party—to continue the New Deal measures forsaken by Roosevelt; what would be the response of the congress? There were rumors that one of the congress leaders had sold out; how would the rank and file react?

Would I find in Washington an affirmation of the Negroes' will to unity and freedom that would remove the deep sense of the danger of war which had made the sudden appearance of the troops of cavalry seem like a revelation of our fate?

STRUGGLE FOR UNITY

For years Negroes have struggled for that unity, seeking to find their allies; sometimes gaining, and sometimes losing ground. And in all Negroes at some period of their lives there is that yearning for a sense of group unity that is the yearning of men for a flag: for a unity that cannot be compromised, that cannot be bought; that is conscious of itself, of its strength, that is militant. I had come to realize that such a unity is unity of a nation, and of a class. I had thought vaguely of the congress in such terms, but it was more like a hope to be realized. I had not thought to seek this sense of affirmation in it. Now I realized that this was the need it must fill for myself and for others.

Negroes from the North, South, East, and West were heading for Washington, seeking affirmation of their will to freedom. They were coming with their doubts and with their convictions. It was more than just another trip to another congress.

When we entered the suburbs of Washington I noticed that the car moved much more slowly than before and started to ask why. But I remembered: there is always that fear among Negroes going from the North into the South of running afoul of Southern custom and Jim Crow laws. The driver knew that we were driving into the capital of the United States—and of legal Jim Crow. The car nosed its way cautiously.

The first thing to do was to go to convention headquarters and make arrangements for rooms. We drove to the Department of Labor building. It is a new building and we were relieved to see so many Negro faces, to find them in charge. Delegates were already grouped about the big lobby; it hummed with conversation. They looked up expectantly as we came through the high portals. We made our way to the tables arranged about the lobby where a number of girls were busy registering delegates. They were pretty girls and we were surprised; usually the pretty girls avoided that part of conventions. We were registered and given credentials: a delegate's card, a badge, a list of instructions, which, among other things, told us to buy a meal ticket. Under Section 2 it told about housing:

After your meal ticket the next important thing is a place to stay. We have done our best. But Washington is a Jim Crow town. We have not

broken down Jim Crowism in large hotels. But we have made history in the matter of housing accommodations for Negroes. First: for 119 delegates we have accommodations in the modern up-to-date Washington Tourist Camp—four blocks away from our place. . . . Second: for 250 delegates we have arranged for the building of an entire village a few yards away from the Washington Monument and two blocks away from the convention meeting place. You will be housed in waterproof tents with wooden floors—clean linen—individual cots—warm blankets. There will be ample facilities for showers. . . .

Also listed were rooms in private homes. I asked why the village had been built and was told that it was a protest against the miserable housing conditions for Negroes in the capital city. So stretched out beneath the long shadow of Washington's monument we found lying a village of tents like those discovered by Steinbeck's Joads. Not far away is where the annual Cherry Blossom Festival is held.

REUNION

Returning to convention headquarters, we find the delegates pouring in. There is a steady roar of voices. We look about for acquaintances.

"Look! What's that guy's name?" I look up; a short man with a high forehead and glasses squeezes past.

"That's John P. Davis."

"Davis, the national secretary?"

"Sure."

"But I've seen his pictures. I thought he was a big guy."

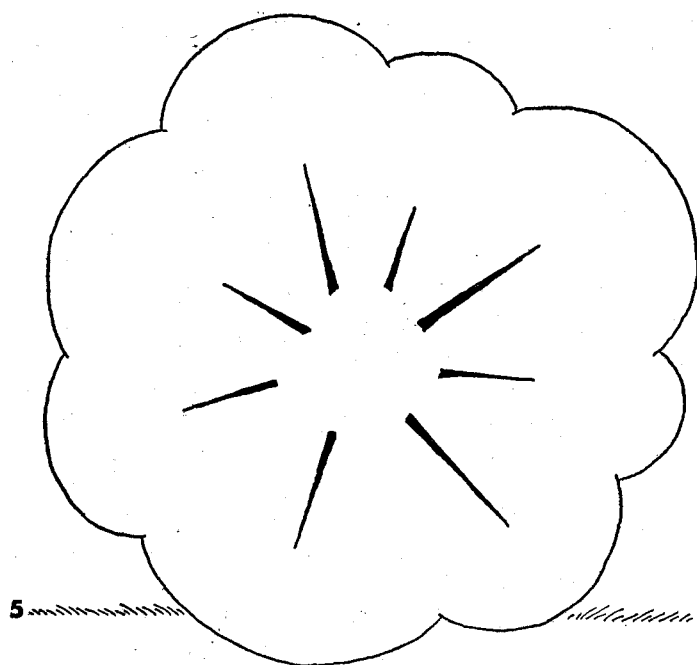
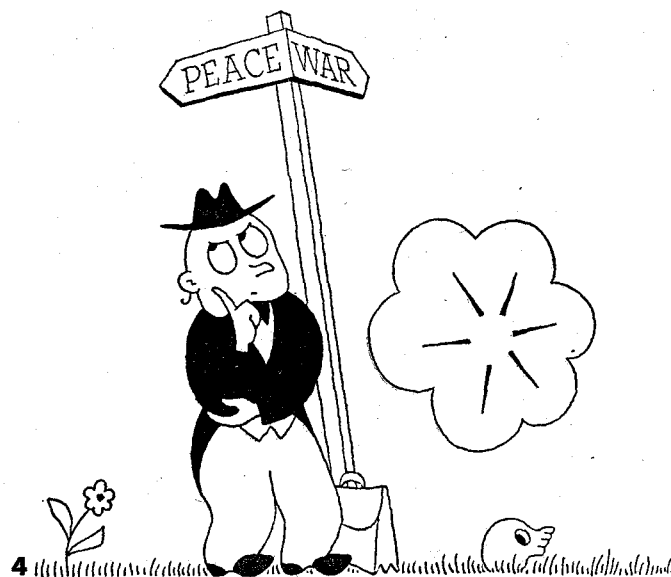
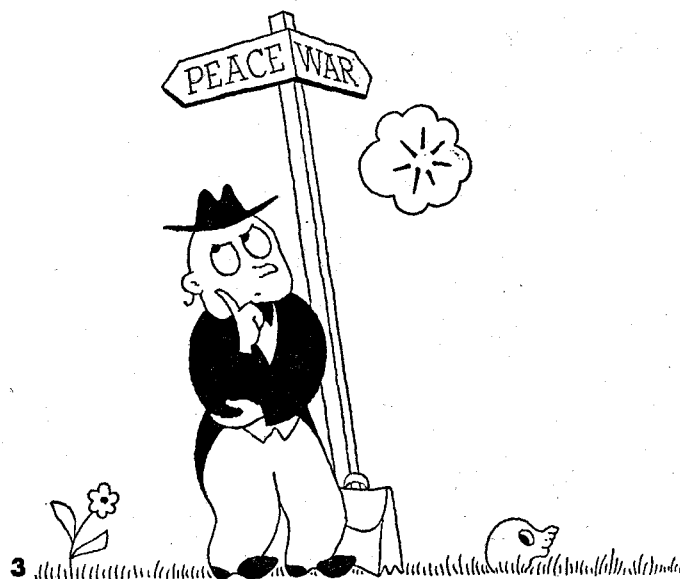
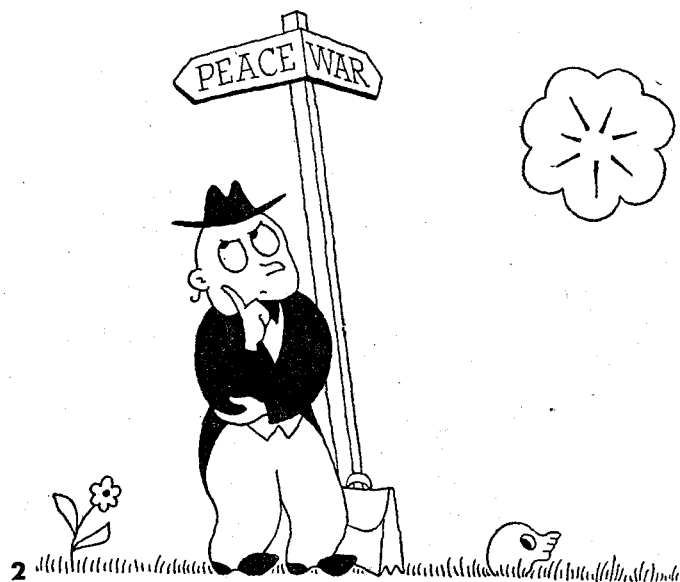
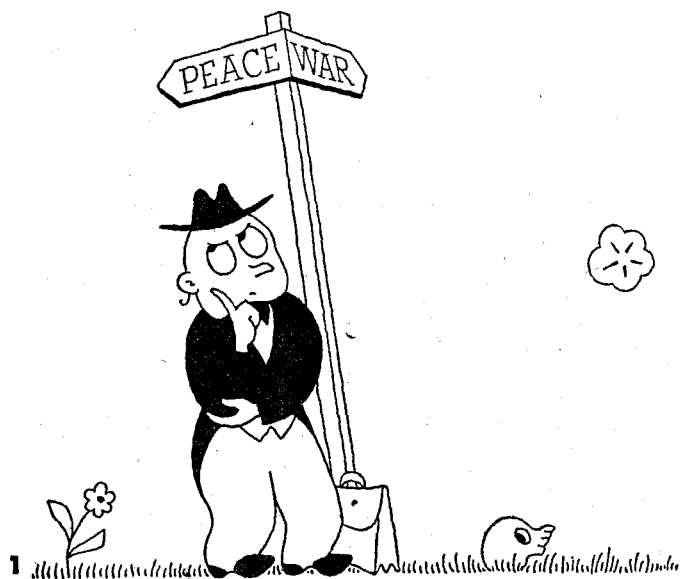
"He's big, all right," someone says. "He told off Dies."

"Thought that was Ben Davis."

"Yeah, but this one told him too."

A tall man in a cattle man's hat has been listening: "Now wasn't that something?" he says, "Both of 'em got him told. All my life I been wanting to see some of our Negro leaders go down there to Congress and let them know how we felt about things. Didn't think I would live to see it, but it happened. And that's why I'm here this morning!"

The lobby is still filling. There are young people and old people, both from the farms, the small towns, and the cities. I can tell the New Yorkers by their manner, their confidence. But there are also many faces that I learned to know in the South. And I know that someone has sacrificed to get them here. Some are farmers, others sharecroppers. They look stiff in their "Sunday" clothes. There are many whites also. And on the lapels of both whites and blacks are to be seen the maroon and white "Stop Lynching" buttons. I walk about the lobby, from group



C. JOHNSON



Crockett Johnson

Liberal at the Crossroads

to group, trying to see if I can pick out those from down where being militant, being a man, carries a penalty of dispossession, of flogging, of rape charges, of lynching death. They too are here; one, James McMillian, a preacher-coal miner from Kentucky, has felt the sting of a lynch rope around his neck and lived to tell about it. His first question is, "What's being done about the Anti-Lynching Bill?"

I talk with a steel worker from Gary, Ind. He speaks about the war and ties it up to the convention. He is well informed. Passing another group I hear:

"I come over three hundred miles to this congress."

"Where you come from?"

"I come from Xenia, Ohio."

"Hell, you ain't come nowhere. I come all the way from Texas!" the other said proudly.

Behind me now, someone is saying: "They tell me John L. Lewis is going to be here."

"That's right, it's here in the program."

"You know, I been wanting to see that guy. I want to get up close, so's I can see what he looks like."

"He sure is talking my way these days. Because from what I know about the Triple A and the FSA out there in Arkansas where I come from, he's talking sense!"

"He sounds all right to me, too, but I want to see what he looks like."

"Well, he'll be here."

I walk inside the auditorium where the convention is to be held. The carpet is thick and deep blue, the ceiling high and soothing to the eyes. In front, on both sides of the speakers' platform, there are gigantic columns that seem to pull you upward, out of yourself, as your eyes follow them aloft.

THE AUDITORIUM

The auditorium had that overwhelming air usually associated with huge churches, and I remembered what Andre Malraux once said about the factory becoming for the workers what the cathedral was, and that they must come to see in it not ideal gods, but human power struggling against the earth. The building is dedicated to labor. I hoped that what was to happen there during the congress would help bring nearer that transformation of which Malraux wrote.

When I walked outside the building I learned that it *was*, for the three days of the convention, sacred ground. I suggested to one of my companions that we go up town for a bite to eat in a cafeteria. He reminded me simply that we were in Washington.

The congress began that evening, called to order by the rapping of a gavel made from timber from the last slave ship to touch American shores. There on the platform were the speakers. John L. Lewis appeared with his daughter, Kathryn, and there was a burst of applause from the audience.

Lewis spoke plainly and with force, and was frequently interrupted by applause. The audience was with him. He spoke like a man who knew how to speak to ordinary folks, and

they understood him and agreed with him. Lewis said:

No group in the population feels more heavily the burden of unemployment and insecurity than the Negro citizens. . . . The denials of civil liberties lie with heavy discrimination upon Negroes. Only when these economic and political evils are wiped out will the Negro people be free of them.

I therefore call upon you to join in common cause with labor that we may seek out as American citizens together those political means and instruments by which the common welfare may be promoted. . . .

Then as his final word was spoken and applause roared up, they saw John P. Davis step forward and halt Lewis before he could return to his seat. He spoke into the microphone. "I am going to ask Mr. Lewis to come forward with two Negro coal miners who know better than any other group of Negro people of the character of the leadership of the president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations." There was a burst of applause and the flashing of press cameras as Davis presented Lewis with a plaque for his "distinguished service to the Negro people."

In his acceptance Lewis stated what his offer to the congress seems to prove and what Negroes throughout the country are beginning to believe:

You know, I am one American who believes in equality of opportunity for the Negro people. And I do not try to conceal the fact; in fact, I am rather anxious that a great many people find out about our views in this country and I am doing what I can to educate them on that particular point.

From the applause I was quite sure there was not a single person in the auditorium who did not see in the ceremony a historical importance.

Following John L. Lewis came A. Philip Randolph. He brought into play that deep, resonant voice which helped him to the presidency of the largest Negro union and of the National Negro Congress itself. The audience was quiet, waiting for him to reveal himself. Several of his recent actions had been strange; his name had appeared in places where they had not expected to see it, and they were waiting for him to confirm the faith that had led them to make him their president. He spoke of the world crisis, of the split in the ranks of labor, of unemployment. But his voice droned out abstract phrases; statistics rolled forth; the speech became involved, and through it sounded unmistakable notes of Red-baiting. From time to time he said things which the people felt strongly and they applauded. But soon they became restless; they had heard these arguments before, arguments that sounded strange in the mouth of one who was supposed to be their leader. The speech continued and, before its end, delegates were leaving the auditorium. I had sat through the address with a feeling of betrayal. I did not realize it, but I had witnessed a leader in the act of killing his leadership.

In his report next morning the national secretary, John P. Davis, voiced the things the delegates felt. He spoke out for the program that they wished to support, and, judging from the reception of the speech, the delegates were assured that theirs was a common will.

We want peace for ourselves and America [Davis said]. We want peace and freedom for the peoples of India, of China, of Africa. . . . The administration is taking sides in this imperialist conflict. Its actions menace our neutrality and our peace. We must join with labor, we must join with youth to insist upon an end to this disastrous policy. . . . The American Negro people will refuse to follow American imperialism in an attack upon the Soviet Union, will refuse to fall victim to anti-Soviet adventures. . . . I have witnessed the real and genuine equal rights of its [the Soviet Union's] many nations and peoples busy and working in amity, collaboration, and peace. I know of their deep friendship and aid to all oppressed people.

The whole spirit of the convention rose and enthusiasm mounted.

That afternoon the delegates divided into several panels. The discussions on economic security were led by Louis Burnham, a young man from Harlem. Goldie Ervin of Pennsylvania, an intense young woman, spoke on the problems of the Negro woman. David Lasser of the Workers Alliance was greeted by the audience as a friend. He spoke on unemployment. Other panels were in progress and the delegates discussed their problems with Congressman Marcantonio of New York, with Joseph Gelders of Alabama, and other leaders from urban centers.

But I am looking for those whose very presence here means a danger faced and a fear conquered, and danger to be faced again.

She is a tall black woman from Arkansas. She has asked to address the panel on economic security. She walks slowly to the microphone, and when she raises her head there are strands of gray hair beneath her flopping black straw hat. She is not accustomed to speaking through a microphone and has to be instructed to stand before it. She speaks slowly:

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here to tell youall that we in Arkansas is having a tight time. Folks down there is working for 60 and 75 cents a day. Folks with kids, I mean. Now youall know that ain't nothing fo' no folks with children to be gitting. I come up here to tell youall about it; and to ask youall if there's *anything* youall can do fo' us down in Arkansas, please to do it.

I was proud to come. I mean I was proud to come to this congress. I was proud my people sent me. You know, we got other people down there who wants to see the hard tasks done. But they's shaky. They's scared they'd be moved off the land. Well, I tell 'em that they moving every day anyhow! I told them if they put me off the land I'll go. I'll do like them folks out there in Missouri done: let 'em put me out on the highway. They got to do something for me. They bet' not harm me. An' if they was to kill me, they'd have to *bury* me. So I'm just on they hands. *I'm* looking for better conditions for my people.

Well, I want to thank youall for letting me tell you 'bout Arkansas. It ain't all I got to tell you, but it's all for right now. Later on I'm going to tell you some more. . . . [She searches in her bag, brings forth what appears to be a roll of bills.]

Oh, yes, I forgot to tell youall about this. Now there's lots of other people down there what wants to come up here. But they ain't got no money. They works all day for 60 and 75 cents and when they through they gits paid off in this stuff. [She holds the bills so the audience may see.] I forgits what they calls it—oh yes, that's right, it's script. Script. This is what they pay you with. They even got they own money; them planters I mean. You git this and you have to take it to what they call the commissary store to spend it. You cain't spend it nowhere else. So you see, they's other people who would be up here today, but they ain't got no money. That's the way things is down where I come from. I got lots more to tell youall, but I ain't going to take up any more of youall's time right now. An' I want' thank youall agin for letting me speak.

After the session I found her in the crowd. The city people were shaking her hand. I asked her to tell me more of conditions in Arkansas. She told me that the men were being thrown out of work by mechanical plows, that the children had no fuel for their schoolhouse—how could they learn? She told me that a merchant, upon hearing that the people were trying to send her to the congress, had given the cannery and agricultural union a contribution. She is the president of her local union, an affiliate of the CIO with 260 members. There is a calm dignity about this woman. Where did she get it? I asked her about religion. She said:

"Well, son. We used to go to the graveyard and preach to folks 'bout heaven. But I done found that the way to serve Christ is by helping folks here on earth."

MILITANT INDIGNATION

What I found among the delegates was a temper of militant indignation. They were people sure of their strength. I listened to Owen Whitfield, the hero of the convention. In many of the speeches I had heard the names Gabriel, Denmark Veasy, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass. And in these mouths the names had a new meaning. And I suddenly realized that the age of the Negro hero had returned to American life.

Whitfield led the Missouri highway demonstration of last year. He is the father of twelve children, a farmer for thirty-five years. He speaks with the skill of the Negro folk-preacher, in terms and images the people understand. The people from the farm country shout "Amen!" and "It's the truth!" Whitfield is of the earth and his speech is of the earth, and I said "Amen!" with the farmers. His is not a speech from above, like Randolph's. He speaks with pride of his Missouri people, and the audience is with him when he lashes out at leaders who avoid positive action out of fear of their "status." Whitfield sacrificed his home and farm and led his wife and family out with two thousand white and black families to face the January weather

and the Missouri highway patrol. His is the pride of one who knows what it means to fight and win. He made the nation listen to the voices of his people.

Hank Johnson is an urban hero. He is a powerful, brown-skinned man over six feet tall. His face is round and in it there is the humor of a small boy. Hank entered the building trades when he was twelve. He and his father were made to pay a Texas local of the AFL a fee for work permits higher than the regular union dues and were not allowed to attend union meetings. He is now a CIO organizer from the Chicago region and led in organizing the packing-house workers. "How can I defend America right or wrong?" he asks. "I am as good an American as *anybody*, but what would I do if I went down round my home in Austin, Texas, and reported some spies, but got myself lynched?" What Hank Johnson did to me is hard to convey. I have seen many of my friends frustrated in their effort to create themselves. They are boys full of protest and indignation which has no social outlet. They are unhappy working at jobs they hate, living under restrictions they hate. Hank Johnson was like one of them *transformed*. He is full of indignation, but indignation that has found a direction. When he spoke all the violence that America has made our Negro heritage was flowing from him transformed into a will to change a civilization. The people said of him: "That Hank Johnson, he's *my* kinda Negro."

Whitfield and Johnson and the people behind them are the answer to those who wonder why there is such a scramble to raise the Booker T. Washington symbol anew in Negro life; why a bad documentary film of Tuskegee's Carver found distribution through RKO. A new pole of leadership has developed among the Negro people and the National Negro Congress is their organization.

Auguries

Watched we the sky today for auguries,
we'd see the wing that roofed the hut of poverty,
that was the ax at executions,
and on the great dead of the poor, the shroud,
now reddening in the vast daybreak
is the banner on the picket line,
is the soap boxer's arm,
is the marcher's shadow.

The poet, dying all his life that he may read
his death throes to the world for auguries,
reports, this hour, oh man, here is my heart,
out on my hand, bewildered,
not like something dead but something born.
Its pulses are the mortal number.
Go set all clocks by them for the new time.
Cry the news in the wind, the poet's heart,
so many generations torn out dying,
now has rage enough to keep it beating.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

It came suddenly, out of the betrayal of the New Deal. First there was the highway demonstration of Missouri; then the defiance of the Klan in Florida, and later Ben Davis "got Dies told." All these things I felt in the process of crystallization at the Third National Negro Congress. I heard the resolution to join with the CIO and I listened, after Randolph had protested that such an agreement would make for controversy, to a delegate shout out from the floor, "Peonage, Anti-Lynch Bill, poll tax, these are our issues. They are the most controversial issues in American life, and some of us will have to die for them! Yes, we want to join with the CIO! We cannot stop for controversy!" And there in the faces of my people I saw strength. There with the whites in the audience I saw the positive forces of civilization and the best guarantee of America's future.

RALPH ELLISON.

Spiritual and Tax Exempt

"As I travel about the country, I find a strong and growing feeling on this franchise question. More and more people believe that unemployment will be solved only as it becomes a disgrace not to work in some capacity. . . . Yesterday a letter came to me from a group of ministers suggesting a sort of religious test for the voting privilege. Their plan is wholly undenominational. Protestants, Catholics, and Hebrews—all would get the vote if they were members of the same church. . . . The only hope for democracy is a sane spiritual revival. The churches should lead in this revival. They have the potential power, the people, and the plants. They are tax exempt and possess great endowments. They, however, must again preach the cross and the necessity of sacrifice."—Excerpts from Roger Babson's syndicated column.

New Fronts against Cancer

Before this year is over, 140,000 Americans will have died of it. "The disease is reducible by 30 to 50 percent." Harold Ward describes the latest research into its causes.

As a medical, scientific, and social problem cancer is rapidly moving up to the head of the class. Throughout the "civilized" world, and nowhere more conspicuously than in the United States, the war on cancer is being conducted on every front and with all the resources at the disposal of a dozen sciences. In the great William H. Crocker Radiation Laboratories of the University of California a group of disciplined specialists is studying the lethal effect upon cancer cells of "neutron beams" shot from the new sixty-inch medical cyclotron. The results are promising but inconclusive. In New York the Memorial Hospital, nucleus of the first full-dress cancer laboratory to be established in the world, actively pursues its researches, ably seconded by the work being done in the other two great international cancer centers, the Fondation Curie in Paris and the Radiumhemmer in Sweden. In New York, also, Dr. M. W. Mettenleiter of St. Clare's Hospital is on the trail of something really big: a reliable blood test which might eliminate the terrible uncertainty that has always attended a correct diagnosis of cancer in its critical early stages. Should this, or any other test, optical, chemical, or physiological, prove to be for cancer what the Wassermann test is for syphilis, another of the world's scourges comes under control, with what relief in human waste and suffering is now beyond calculation.

CASUALTY STATISTICS

Just how much suffering may be realized from a few figures. Before this first year of World War II is over something like 140,000 Americans—most of them beyond the age of forty—will have died from one or another form of cancer, which today is second only to heart disease as a cause of death in this country. And for every one who succumbs to the ravages of this mystery killer at least five others are facing a similar doom, with very uneven chances of escape—unless they can get the right medical care soon enough and often enough. Furthermore, according to data collected by the National Health Survey, these victims of cancer are forced to lose, every year, more than thirty million days of useful work—meaning, of course, vastly greater losses in earning power and in the sum total of the national wealth. As cancer is a disease requiring the most skilled medical attention, often followed by operative procedures that are both hazardous and costly, the chances of effective treatment for America's impoverished millions are indeed slight.

Put in this way the story sounds very grim—almost as pessimistic as the title of *Fortune* magazine's full length account of "Cancer, the Great Darkness." Actually, the light is breaking, so that today qualified authorities

associated with the widespread educational campaign of the American Society for the Control of Cancer tell us that the disease is "reducible 30 to 50 percent as a cause of death if the public and physicians take advantage of known facts concerning its control."

What are some of these facts? Of first importance is the need to avoid panic, the paralyzing fear that some obscure swelling, growth, or sore on the body *might* be cancerous. Pathologists have long known that cancer is the malignant sub-group of a large class of "neoplasms," or new growths called tumors. To the layman all tumors may look and feel alike, despite the fact that most of them, however disfiguring and unpleasant, are "benign," or not fatal to life. For this reason, if you become worried by *any* swelling—especially on the breasts if you are a woman—or internal pain that is not obviously an ache or strain, consult your doctor or the nearest clinic at once. If there is no danger, you break even; but should there be the slightest chance of cancer, preventive measures can be taken immediately. Promptness is vital in the case of a disease which, like cancer, acts by spreading imperceptibly from its point of origin to neighboring or even remote tissues. Without your cooperation medical science is helpless; with it not only you but also thousands of others are being vastly aided through an increase in our knowledge of a malady whose cause and origin may well be connected with the secret of life itself. Remember that cancer is definitely curable—if attended to in its early stages by competent physicians. Avoid quack remedies and treatments as you would the plague, for as the eminent specialist, Dr. Francis Carter Wood, writes, "The cancer quack is the most loathsome variety of quack, because he treats a disease which if not properly handled is inevitably fatal."

SOME POPULAR ERRORS

Many people think that cancer is a germ disease or a blood disease, is contagious, may be caused by diet, alcohol, a variety of "immoral and unsocial" practices, or even is directly inherited, as one inherits eye color or hair form. None of these beliefs is true for the simple reason that no one knows the real "cause" of cancer. As for inheritance, despite elaborate experiments on animals and many apparently significant facts drawn from clinical records, the very most we can say is that a *tendency to cancer* exists in all of us, without regard to sex, race, family history, or economic status.

Two interesting facts on the prevalence of cancer are worth mentioning here. One is the connection between the disease and the later ages of life; the other is "occupational cancer."

We know that from about the age of forty both men and women become more subject to this disease—which bears out the theory that it is "degenerative" in character, indicating a failure of the ordinary checks and balances responsible for healthy tissue growth. This fact, added to our improved skill in diagnosing cancer as a cause of death, is one reason for the high recorded mortality from that cause. We are becoming a nation of older people, of people who now *live long enough* to challenge Nature on a higher level of her unending dialectic. In a sense the entire struggle against cancer may be regarded as one phase of a determined, if still socially undirected meeting of this challenge. The brilliant conquests of the infectious diseases characteristic of childhood and early maturity have imposed upon our society a new responsibility. By increasing our average length of life from less than forty to nearly sixty years in the past century we have simultaneously acquired the obligation to make old age socially honorable and to lessen its special liabilities to new forms of suffering, disease, and death. Cancer shares with many types of heart disease, hardening of the arteries, kidney trouble, cerebral hemorrhage, and even diabetes the attention which an aroused and socially invigorated science will have to give to what Dr. E. V. Cowdry and his associates of the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation have called *The Problems of Ageing*.

OCCUPATIONAL CANCER

This does not mean that cancer is the sole prerogative of older people. Setting aside the fact that it has been found in quite young people, there is the disturbing situation long known to specialists as "occupational cancer." As far back as 1878 two German investigators noted a large number of cases of lung carcinoma contracted by miners in the cobalt arsenide mines of Saxon Switzerland. Dr. Alice Hamilton, internationally famous as an authority on industrial diseases, has collected material showing the close connection between cancer and those who work in coal and oil. Paraffin, tar, arsenic, radium emanations, and X rays (the last two of supreme importance in cancer prevention) also appear to initiate and excite the peculiar cell growths which lead to cancer—thus suggesting a subtle chemical relationship in the development of the disease. Coal tar, the basis of a gigantic industry, may hold, in the form of the "benzene ring" which is its fundamental unit, one of the keys destined to unlock the secret of cancer. Already skilled biochemists in England and the United States—notably Dr. G. H. Twombly of Memorial Hospital and Drs. Andervont and Fieser of the US Public Health Service—have isolated and studied the

chemical *dibenzanthracene*, which seems to have the property of inducing cancerous growths in mice. The trail becomes warmer when it is discovered that certain secretions of the human body—cholesterol and the female sex hormone, oestrone—have a chemical similarity with dibenzanthracene. Indeed, the injection of huge doses of the latter into mice resulted in cancers for a significant number of them, thus powerfully strengthening the chemical theory of cancer causation.

KOEGL'S THEORY

In Holland, Fritz Koegl, one of the world's great biochemists, has made a discovery that may provide a definite answer to one of the toughest questions in all cancer research: the fundamental structural differences between normal body cells and the cells which give rise to malignant growths. For reasons that are still obscure the protein molecules in a healthy organism, when broken down into their constituent amino acids, exhibit a very peculiar characteristic. They are all, so to speak, "left-handed" (levo-rotary, or left-turning), and equipped with a mechanism capable of turning "right-handed" substances around. But Dr. Koegl, in a series of brilliant experiments, showed that cancer proteins insisted on remaining right-handed, cultivating a sort of "right deviation" policy sharply opposed to the "general line" established by Nature and, through a subtle permeation of healthy tissues, eventually attacking the vital organs and causing death.

If this surprising phenomenon—which would have delighted Friedrich Engels, who was forever on the alert for new examples of the conflict of opposites—is verified by other workers, then we are indeed coming close to the heart of the cancer enigma. Perhaps on the basis of such a discovery, inspired by a minute study of just one problem, we may be heading toward a revolutionary change in our entire understanding not only of what constitutes "health" and "disease" but also as to the very nature of "life" and "death."

All of which, however interesting, is highly speculative. Cancer remains. And before concluding this sketchy outline it might be well to answer one or two more concrete questions. One of them is sure to be: What are the most prevalent forms of this disease and how are these forms distributed among men and women?

Dr. Clarence C. Little, managing director of the American Society for the Control of Cancer, has broken down the census figures to show that of the twenty principal forms of cancer the most serious are: for men, cancer of the stomach and duodenum, the intestines, (including the rectum), the prostate gland, and the kidneys. It will be noticed that most of these cancers are in inaccessible spots, thus necessitating extreme care in following up suspicious signs as early as possible. For women the line-up is: cancer of the uterus, the breasts, the stomach and intestines. The first two, being within reach of prompt medical inspection, are responsible for the general belief that



Charles Martin

NEWS ITEM: "War profits sadden Sloan—General Motors head sorry that bloodshed boosts sales."

"I weep for you . . ."

cancer is more common among women than men; actually, if treated sufficiently early, fairly definite cures are now obtained in about 75 percent of the cases. These—and most other—cures depend exclusively either on surgical removal, on radium needle treatment, or on X rays, the method chosen depending in turn upon a large number of special factors. For certain types of cancer—especially of the skin—cures are relatively simple, but in no case should any of the suspicious signs listed by Dr. Little and other authorities be disregarded.

THE "CHINESE WALL"

This advice is easy to give—but just how well can it be followed by the 600,000 or more cancer victims in this country today? The answer has been powerfully dramatized in the current documentary play, *Medicine Show*. An enormous potential of medical resources: laboratories, hospitals, specialists, and thousands of capable physicians. Between these and the vast majority of the American people, a Chinese Wall of obstructions, bureaucracy, and a vindictive clinging to a medical individualism that would make Hippocrates blush with shame, if it were not for the vigor, courage, and progressiveness of the rank and

file doctors one sees at work in Paul De Kruijff's inspiring film, *The Fight for Life*.

Cancer can be controlled, can be prevented and cured. It is just one part—and an increasingly urgent one—of the problem summarized in the powerful mass movement for a national health program, as so ably described by Johns Hopkins' Dr. Henry E. Sigerist in the June, 1939, issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Cancer, the deadly growth which attacks and kills millions of human beings every year, is but a physical symbol of the far deeper, more virulent and brutal cancer which, like imperialism, war, and ruthless capitalist exploitation, is trying desperately to reverse the sound and orderly development of the social organism.

HAROLD WARD.

Don't Tease the Elephants

"IN THE [Republican] conference with leaders of the Senate, where Governor Stassen was the guest of Senator McNary at luncheon, such New Deal policies as social security, exchange regulation, and labor relations were passed over because Senators Vandenberg and Taft were present and both have positive views on them."—*New York Times*, April 30.

Big Navies for Big Pirates

Major Allen Johnson discusses some naval fact and fiction. Why Rear Admiral Taussig said, "War with Japan is inevitable." Super-dreadnaught appropriations.

WHEN Rear Admiral J. K. Taussig told the Senate Naval Affairs Committee that "war with Japan is inevitable," he was slapped on the wrist only very gently. Harold C. Stark, chief of naval operations, disavowed the opinion, but did not take issue with it. Cordell Hull, secretary of state, denied that Taussig had spoken for anyone but himself; but no one has yet come forward in the administration to assure the American public that war with Japan is unthinkable. Although the good rear admiral is on the retired list, he is still subject to military discipline. Therefore he could not have made his sensational prediction unless he were confident that it would be appreciated in the proper quarters.

Much the same can be said of the sudden revelation that Japan is outbuilding the United States in capital ships. The circumstances surrounding this bit of news is, to say the least, suspicious. The Navy Department popped it one morning just prior to House hearings on the naval appropriations bill. Like the Taussig testimony, such news has a purpose. It can be counted upon to raise blood pressure in Congress, and more than blood pressure, it will help raise the enormous sums of money for naval expenditures which the admirals are trying to get from the Treasury.

On April 18 the 1940-41 appropriation was passed in the Senate, totaling \$963,797,478. This provides for the building of two 45,000-ton battleships, two cruisers, eight destroyers, one aircraft carrier, six submarines, 471 naval fighting planes and the completion of eighteen ships of all types now building. It is the largest program since the days of the last world war. The navy has asked for a 25 percent increase beyond this program, but the Senate is now discussing only an 11 percent increase costing three and a third billions over six years and a third of a billion a year to maintain. Obviously only something alarming, like Taussig's nightmare, or the sudden discovery of Japan's super-dreadnaught construction, could bludgeon such huge sums from the public. The American people are "from Missouri"; they know little about the purposes of the navy. In particular, they do not yet sense the full character of American policy, a policy on which the strategy and purpose of the navy rest.

A QUESTION OF POLICY

To begin with, it is necessary to emphasize that a battleship or a bomber is not *per se* a weapon of offense or defense; that is determined by the use to which it is put, or better, the policy which underlies its use. But it must be considered axiomatic, that *the navy*

of an imperialist power is always an instrument of aggression, in peace and in war. Lieut. Comm. Charles C. Gill, says in his volume, *Naval Power in the War*: "Theoretically, in times of peace at least, the seas are free to all, but even then certain areas are said to be potentially controlled by certain nations by virtue of their relatively superior sea power in these respective waters." What Commander Gill means is that the stronger navies are able to dominate the areas around their main bases, even if those areas are not directly under their political control. He implies what is to most of us self-evident: naval superiority for capitalist countries is an auxiliary to the economic penetration of colonial markets. The navy is an instrument in the aggressive warfare for trade privileges and sources of raw materials which goes on con-

tinually under the conditions of imperialist life. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the classical strategist of American naval policy, was quite emphatic on this point. In his most important volume, *Naval Strategy*, he says that "commercial value cannot be separated from military in sea strategy, for the greatest interest of the sea is commerce."

But if this is true for any one imperialist nation, it is true for all of them. In the era in which we live, the era which Lenin distinguished by the term "imperialism," a number of great naval powers have come into being, every one of them anxious to achieve its own commercial supremacy, solve its own market problems in an ever-narrowing area and at the expense of the others. Technique and resources in this struggle are no longer the prerogative of one or two great nations; in our time four or five major powers, able and eager to support big navies, have locked in a bitter, exhausting rivalry, which is after all only one aspect of their general economic rivalry. Ultimate hegemony must go to that power, or group of powers, which is able to afford the enormous expense of modern naval building and can meet its technical requirements. In the present war the belligerents and their subordinate nations are continuing their naval construction. But the United States is perhaps the only power that is capable of large scale, long-term expansion of its naval arms.

The construction of modern leviathans requires great technical capacities, large funds of raw materials; their upkeep demands trained personnel and reliable fuel supplies. Unlike an army, a navy cannot be improvised. It takes years and years before battleships—the backbone of any navy—can be rolled off the ways. The latter-day development of the submarine and particularly the airplane by no means nullifies the significance of the battleship to any navy, but it does pose aggravating problems such as the need for heavier tonnage to permit better deck-armoring and larger gun ranges.

PERPETUAL MOTION

What is more, the American Navy has a specific naval doctrine based, in the words of Maj. George Fielding Eliot in his book *The Ramparts We Watch*, "upon maintaining both a numerical and a ship-for-ship superiority in fighting power over any probable enemy." The American Navy insists, as a matter of doctrine, that when any great naval power constructs a ship that is more heavily armored or better equipped in gun power, the US Navy will build a ship equaling and surpassing the other nation's achievement. Which is about the nearest thing there is to perpetual motion. And expensive motion, at that.

Navy Holdup

TRUST the big navy buccaneers to seize on any pretext to push their program for mulcting additional millions out of the American public. The hearings of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on the \$655,000,000 naval expansion bill were ushered in with the sudden discovery that Japan is secretly building a mighty armada to challenge the United States. Now the Allied reverses in Norway are being used as an excuse to reopen the hearings. Secretary of the Navy Edison has also come to the aid of the treasury raiders with the statement that American battleships must be redesigned to meet the threat to their exposed surfaces from bombers. For what purpose is this huge navy being built? Secretary of State Hull's recent solicitude over the Dutch East Indies, thousands of miles from San Francisco, shows that the plans of the Roosevelt administration have more in common with world domination than with national defense.

Not to be outdone, the Army Air Corps has also gone into action and begun dropping a few bombs on public resistance to exorbitant war expenditures. Maj. Gen. H. H. Arnold, chief of the Army Air Corps, testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee that of the 2,700 war planes now used by the army, all but fifty-two are obsolete. He also stated that by June 30, 1941, only six thousand planes will have been produced for the needs of the US and foreign countries. This conflicted with the testimony of Rear Admiral Towers, chief of the Naval Bureau of Aeronautics, that plane production was now seventeen thousand a year and would be twenty-five thousand by the end of 1940. Somebody is lying, but that doesn't prevent all hands from pulling together for turning the bulk of our plane production over to the Allies.

The aftermath of the last war brought lamentation and mourning for the admirals. The naval threat of Germany had been eliminated, the admirals of the victorious powers were quite ready to square off among themselves, but political considerations intervened. The peoples of the world wanted peace; they wanted disarmament, that mirage for which they had been cajoled into fighting. Economic and financial pressures ruled out a new naval race, but since general disarmament was abjured on all sides, the navies agreed to freeze the ratios of their strength on a tonnage basis. The three major powers, Great Britain, the United States, and Japan, at their Washington conference in 1922 adopted the tonnage ratio of 5:5:3. But within the limits of such restrictions a struggle continued upon the type and character of various fighting vessels. The British, for example, tolerated the limitation of cruiser strength to low tonnages and short cruising radii; in a far-flung empire they had numerous bases from which to operate. The United States, on the other hand, insisted upon larger cruisers with longer-range cruising potentialities: the American bases are far apart and lines of communication very extended.

It was inevitable, when the economic crisis compelled an intensified struggle for markets and export advantages, that the navies of the major powers would soon chafe at treaty limitations. The particular diplomacy of Great

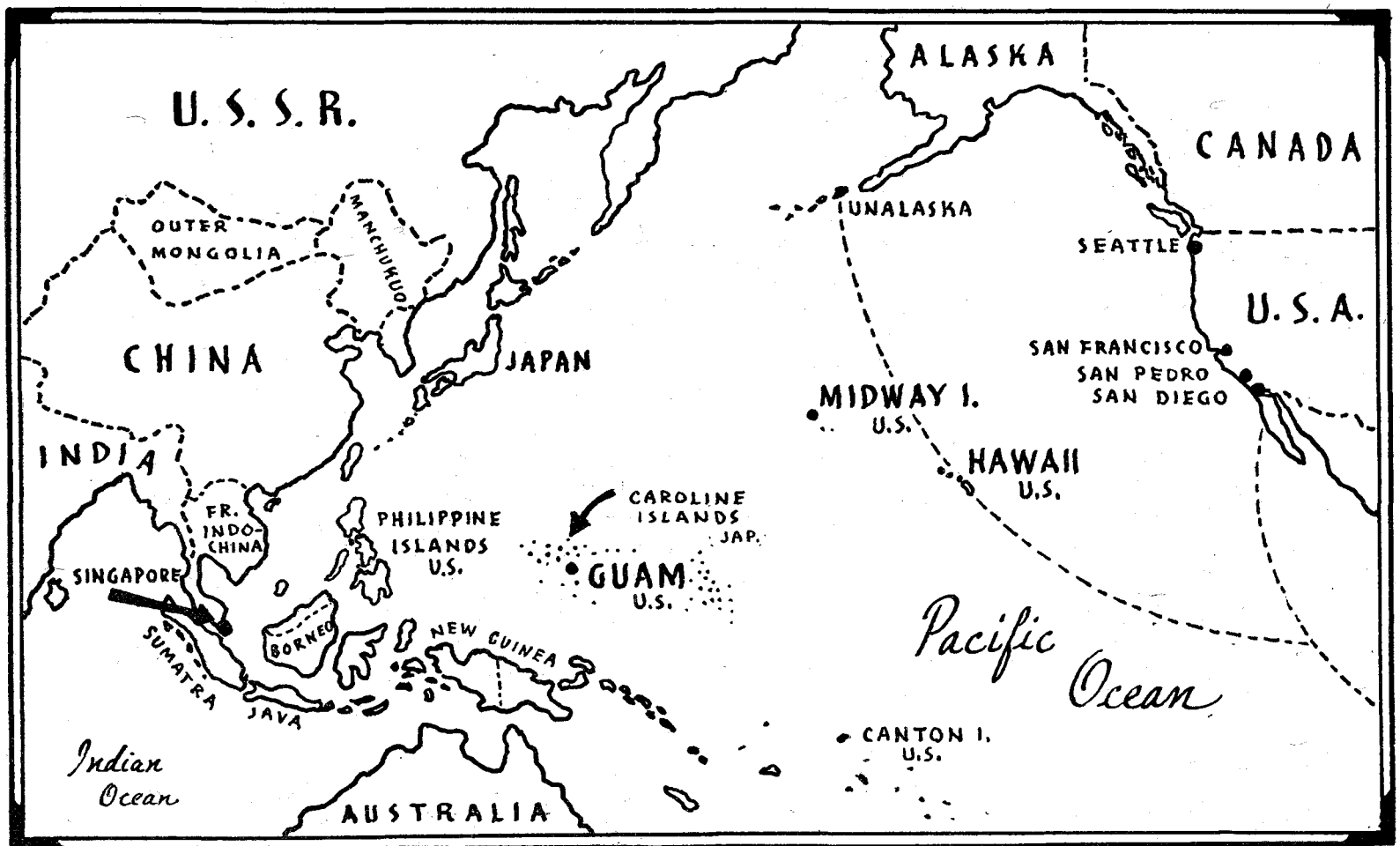
Britain toward Nazi Germany resulted in the Anglo-German naval agreement of July 1935 in which German naval supremacy in the Baltic was recognized. From all sides came denunciations of the post-war treaties, followed by accelerated naval building. Her greater economic strength and greater confidence in her imperialist position enabled the United States to delay for a period her part in the race. Moreover, the Good Neighbor policy, with its progressive aspects, obviated for a time the necessity for large scale naval construction. The fact that American naval construction has been renewed on such a cyclopean scale is proof in reverse that the progressive aspects of American foreign policy lie definitely in the past.

By last September the naval strengths in battleships of the three major powers, Great Britain, the United States, and Japan, stood at the ratio of 15:15:10. In total tonnage, the ratio was 1,330,000 to 1,280,000 to 745,000. Authentic sources indicate that Great Britain is planning and has appropriated funds for ten more battleships. The United States is building eight and Japan is also reported to be building eight. When the total new tonnage of all types of ships has been completed, Great Britain will have a slight edge over the United States. This calculation of tonnage excludes the possibility of further building at different rates of speed by the major powers. Actually, Japan will at some moment in the

future exceed the 3:5 ratio with the United States because her new building program began earlier, and her ships may be completed earlier.

The war is itself having an interesting effect on the ratio of American naval strength to those of rival powers. The Germans have sunk at least one British battleship, have probably damaged at least one more, and have sunk and damaged several cruisers and smaller craft. The seriousness of these losses cannot be fully estimated, but the advantage in tonnage, at least for a while, goes to the United States. If the navy succeeds in getting the 25 percent expansion program through Congress the perspective will be a navy of thirty capital ships. Even if the Japanese continue building and Britain compensates the loss of the *Royal Oak* and anticipated further losses, the American margin will be substantial. This conforms to the general purpose of American imperialism in this war, namely to achieve its own domination over all comers.

The Roosevelt administration appreciates keenly that its British and Japanese naval rivals are both deeply involved in wars that increasingly strain and exhaust their economies. This gives the administration an opportunity to achieve its own naval preeminence, even though that must considerably strain the American budget and American productive resources also. Until now a division of labor has existed between the American and British



AMERICANS HAVE LITTLE OR NO IDEA of the tremendous distances across the mid-Pacific. San Francisco, for example, is just short of nine thousand miles from the isle of Java. Only an aggressive, imperialist naval policy can hope to control areas so deep into the South Pacific as the Dutch East Indies. Note that the first line of continental defense is based on an arc from the Aleutian Islands, off Alaska, through Hawaii, meeting another arc from San Diego to the Panama Canal. Observe, by contrast, where Guam and the Philippines lie.

navies: while the British dominated the Atlantic, the United States was expected to police the Pacific. The rise of Japanese naval power had undermined the British Far Eastern position. Hector Bywater, the British naval authority, admitted back in 1934 that "strategically [the British] position has deteriorated to an alarming extent. Unpalatable though it may be, the truth is that we are not at present in a position to defend our widespread and priceless interests in the Pacific." But, although themselves threatened by Japanese naval power, the British have been compelled to utilize the Japanese as a counterweight to American imperialist penetration in the Far East and the South Pacific. Thus, while the United States adopts the policy of tacit division of function with the British Navy, she can never trust the British not to throw their own weight behind Japan against the interests of the United States.

The present war intensifies this situation, and also alters it considerably. Britain is forced to concentrate her fleet in home waters to secure the areas most vital to her, such as the Mediterranean. Even in the Atlantic the United States asserts, and prepares to assert even more fully, leadership in her own interests. The search for additional bases in the Caribbean, the talk of buying up key islands off the South American coast, the proposed application of the Monroe Doctrine to Greenland and Iceland, the three hundred mile "chastity belt" around the northern and southern continents all express this tendency.

It is in the Pacific, however, that the main American naval concentrations operate. The primary line of naval bases extend from Dutch Harbor at the tip end of the Aleutian Islands off Alaska through Pearl Harbor at Hawaii. There is a proposal to buy the Cocos and Galapagos islands from Ecuador, which would complete the primary chain of bases to the western end of the Panama Canal. From the Aleutian Islands through Hawaii to Panama there is formed an arc, some three thousand miles from the Pacific Coast at its westernmost point; the bases are themselves some thousands of miles apart.

But the administration is not satisfied with this arc. It is extending its lines at least three thousand miles *beyond Hawaii*, through Guam and the Philippines. Cordell Hull has interceded for the status quo in the Dutch East Indies. Relations with Australia are being cemented with deliberate purpose. It is not a defensive navy the admirals are building. It is an offensive navy, a navy for the domination of vast distances, a navy that is intended to encroach upon the colonial possessions of other powers and to protect those encroachments.

This brings us back to Admiral Taussig's synthetic alarm. For the factor of distance is also a controlling one for Japan. It is completely unreal to assume that the Japanese threaten the *continental* security of the United States with their naval forces. No array of warships, not even super-dreadnaughts, can operate thousands of miles away from their

bases and fueling stations, especially if to do so means to operate in enemy waters. No matter how quixotic the Japanese admirals may be, they would not dare squander their capital ships by vain stabs into American waters. For Japan is an island; it is itself perilously exposed and very much at the mercy of geography.

The problem of the security of the American continent, the security of the American people, revolves around the *character* of American foreign policy. Navies and bombers are after all inanimate objects: if the foreign policy of a given country is progressive its naval and military arm cannot be employed for reactionary purposes. If its foreign policy is imperialist, then its armed forces acquire an imperialist substance; it operates against the interests of the people. Take the Soviet Navy or Army, by contrast. No quest for markets, no search for raw materials, no compulsion of profit and colonial domination animate any section of the Soviet people. Soviet policy arises from the substance of its economy: its progressive, non-imperialist policy. That is why even an expansion of Soviet armed forces in no way menaces neighboring peoples or colonial areas, and therefore does not jeopardize the peace and progress of the Soviet people themselves.

That is not true of the United States, that is, of its ruling class. The fact that the administration strategists contemplate *expansion* of their armed forces, and especially of the navy, is proof of their own intention to extend and fortify the American imperialist position while their rivals are occupied elsewhere. This is the altered fact, the new fact in American naval policy. It is a burdensome policy in terms of its cost, since the cost will be borne by reduction in the standard of living and social services of the common people. It is an adventurous policy in its implications and strategy, which the common people will be asked to underwrite with their lives. It is a reactionary policy. For it promises the subjection of democracy at home, and at the same time it contemplates the forcible dominion over the peoples of other countries, peoples who will be fighting, before this war in Europe is over, for liberation from imperialism as a system, for their political and economic independence of the capitalist world.

MAJOR ALLEN JOHNSON.

Far Eastern Doublecross

EVERY sign points to an Anglo-French-Japanese agreement in the Far East. Reports say that Japan will evacuate the Tientsin concession in return for which British banks will bolster Japanese currency in north China. Most significant of all, Britain will hand over to Japan the \$6,000,000 worth of Chinese silver, property of the Chiang Kai-shek government which has been held in the vaults of British north China banks since 1937. Conversations toward this deal have continued for months between Shigemitsu, the Japanese ambassador in London, and Sir

Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's appeasement expert. More than that, the British have been outbidding the United States in renewed support to Japan's economy. Although California is the traditional source for Japan's oil, it was the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. which just sold Tokyo a million barrels of crude oil at cut-rate prices. Two other interesting facts you haven't seen in the papers are that the entire production of the Granby copper mines in British Columbia have been assigned to Japan for the next three years. Similarly, Egypt is negotiating sales of cotton for the invaders of China. All this jibes with a remarkable statement which ex-Premier Edouard Daladier gave the *Osaka Mainichi* on February 29, in which he virtually promised French recognition for Wang Ching-wei and acknowledged Japanese rights to interfere with the French-owned railway to southwest China. This same trend was dramatized by the speech of Sir Robert Craigie, British ambassador to Tokyo, who recently declared that Britain and Japan were ultimately striving for the same objectives in the Far East.

Obviously England is pursuing her traditional policy when things get hot in Europe: Japan will be encouraged to frighten the colonial peoples, to harass the USSR, to offset the imperialist rivalry of the United States. Paradoxically, Japan's weakness has given her a source of diplomatic strength. She is bargaining fast and loose in the hope of salvaging her conquests in China and at the same time preparing to make future gains when the Western powers lock more deeply in their European death grip.

Most alarming is the fact that Washington seriously considers underwriting the Anglo-French-Japanese deal. It is true that American hostility to such an alliance runs deep—remember the Hull rebuff to the Wang Ching-wei government, the recent note on the Dutch East Indies, and bear in mind the naval race. Yet last week undercover discussions were reported between Ambassador Grew and Hachiro Arita, the Tokyo foreign minister. Last week also, Francis B. Sayre, Philippine high commissioner, arrived in Japan. He was received by the mikado and the empress; as a key man in the State Department, Sayre's mission to study Japanese-American relations in the South Pacific and elsewhere means more than appears on the surface.

Meanwhile, Dr. Tsiang, political director of China's Executive Council, broadcast another appeal for the support of the Chinese dollar, which fell last week to a new low of 4.65 cents, one-third last year's value. The Anglo-Japanese maneuvers and the blockade are undermining China's fiscal position. The United States might expand its \$20,000,000 loan of last February and must, of course, continue purchasing silver. But the fact remains that this country is still the major bulwark of Japan's aggression. Until the embargo is employed to undo the damage of the past three years, every American has reason to fear Washington's complicity in a deal at China's expense.



William Gropper

The Farms Blew Away

Oklahoma's dreaded dust storms are kicking up again. Thousands of new "Okies" are in the making. More than 120,000 farm families are getting their jalopies ready.

Oklahoma City, Okla.

THE dust is blowing again. The day might start clear. The farmer has planned his work carefully. First to the store for mail or to trade eggs, each for 1 cent, then home and into the fields to terrace the land, if rain comes, maybe . . . or to list on the contour, for rain . . . or to dig up the maize and corn cemented by the dust banks. His eyes are often tilted upward, watching the stingy sky for rain.

At home perhaps the wife has started her daily routine: cleaning, dusting, feeding the chicks, getting out a wash delayed because of the past week's dust, or taking care of any number of the hundred details of a farm day.

Then slowly the wind comes up and begins its slow torture. If it blows hard, swirling, blinding clouds of dust sweep in yellow-brown flurries across the plains. The throat and lungs and eyes and teeth and nostrils start to fill with the fine silt until breathing itself becomes a deep hurt. Even in the house the dust penetrates in spite of all kerosened cloths, wet sheets, taped window cracks, or wettened handkerchiefs. Sometimes the wind whistles and it becomes a real blizzard of blowing earth. The dust creeps into the taste and insides. The skin around the mouth and eyes grows taut. The lungs cough. And the woman inside sometimes feels a painful sense of helplessness, an utter frustration or a furious indignation at the blowing fields.

GONE WITH THE WIND

Outside there is the continual pounding of the dust flurries and each new blast rains a small shower of topsoil. There is a vast slushing of blowing earth, adding to the 58 percent of Oklahoma soil that has been blown out. Ten yards away the half-buried combine or dust-mounded fence rows cannot be seen. Thistles grab at any stationary object and small hummocks of dirt form. Fields are blown clean and furrows are leveled or scooped out and deposited on another field or in another state. Perhaps two hundred miles off, people in Oklahoma City will find their tongues crawl on their dry lips as the air fills with the dust.

Coughing, the farmer will return from the gyrating fields. He is restless in the house. He may cuss and discuss the dust, the banks, his absentee neighbors from Hartford, Conn., or the Kansas City loan outfit who are letting their foreclosed land blow to hell in a basket. He may again figure the prospect of rain or a crop, the amount of federal assistance for soil conservation practices. He adds the score slowly and it is hard to think of leaving after twenty years of his struggle and life on this farm.

"We can or feel," as one Dust Bowl pioneer said, "or think as if the

experiences of our years of life together had never been. And they are all bound up with the little corner to which we have given our continued and united efforts. To leave voluntarily—to break all these closely knit ties for the sake of a possibly greater comfort elsewhere—seems like defaulting on our task. We may have to leave. We can't hold out indefinitely without some return from the land, some source of income, however small. But I think I can never go willingly or without pain that as yet seems unendurable."

At night, perhaps, with the wind still blowing, this question is point number one on the agenda of many Dust Bowl homes. Abandoned houses, whose only occupant is the dust itself, are scattered throughout the Panhandle and the western section. Silently they describe the sharp anguish of uprooted lives. And now, in one of Oklahoma's most critical drought years, the dust is blowing again.

STORY OF THE "OKIES"

What is the simple story of Oklahoma and its "Okies" for men to learn by?

Oklahoma sits deep in the heart of America's grassroots. The state itself spreads wide like a country girl on an organ stool. In the north, there are the lead and zinc smelters and pyramids of slag; in the east, rye and wheat and idle men; in the center, and widely, the oil derricks; in the south, cotton and the eroded land; in the west, the Dust Bowl.

This former homeland of the Joads is a young state, rich in its resources, richer in its warm-hearted people. In more than a symbolic sense, it is America's last frontier. For it was to this quondam land of the red man that land-hungry pioneers from all sections of the nation trekked fifty years ago in their quest for new ground.

The same razor-sharp hunger stalks today: the hunger for land, whether it be in Oklahoma or any other state, but the desire for a man's own piece of dirt that he can work with pride.

Since the "runs" into the state, much soil has blown. And the pioneers who staked the land and built a state out of a wilderness have witnessed the steady destruction wreaked by Wall Street sluicings and raping of the land. Ghost towns throughout the state give mute accusation to the betrayal of the people and its resources by an advanced finance capitalism. Evidences of human and physical erosion are sharp wounds.

Under the hectic overexploitation this frontier was closed early, forcing thousands of Oklahoma citizens to leave for supposedly greener pastures or a new homeland. Oklahoma is losing about fifty thousand acres of its topsoil annually—and thousands of its

sturdy people who depend on the soil for life. The erosion of the depression years has been quiet but more destructive than war.

Following the plaguing dust storms of 1935, the fifth year of drought and farm insecurity, more than seven thousand families took out for the California "grapes of wrath" country. In 1936 the dust storm torture and crop failures sent more than 16,500 more to the West Coast "chamber of commerce" climate. In September 1936 alone 3,900 families tore their roots from the Oklahoma soil and made the somber pilgrimage like the Joads. Oklahoma's Panhandle, once called No-Man's Land, which now lies in the heart of America's Dust Bowl, lost more than half its population in the last four years, people who could no longer hang onto their deeply sunk anchorages. Highway 66, the historic Sante Fe trail, has become another "trail of tears," on which a new generation trek like the dispossessed Indian people of another century.

Nor has 1939 brought any relief for the Oklahoma farmer. Next to 1936 it has been the driest year of the last two decades. Water is at a premium. The wheat crop will be the smallest on record. Oklahoma City and forty cities throughout the Sooner state are threatened with immediate water shortages. Under the impact of this drought, lack of work, and the critical farm insecurity, more than 120,000 more Southwestern farm families are slated for migration this year.

LANDOWNER TO MIGRANT

Once the Oklahoma farmer was his own landowner. Then of necessity he became a victim of the banks and their exorbitant interest rates. Then he was forced into a tenant farmer's status, as are three out of every four Oklahoma farmers today. Now he is only a crop's distance away from day laboring or migrancy. With the continuance of the drought, Oklahoma's farmers by the thousands are talking of exodus, many of them saying, "Let's give it back to the Indians."

Nor are these people "floaters": they are the people who built this state. A study made by the Farm Security Administration in 1938 disclosed that of the migrant households investigated in California, 53.3 percent of the "Okies" had lived more than twenty years on their own earth, that 77.3 percent of them in all had lived more than ten years in Oklahoma. It showed that 75 percent had been sharecroppers or farm laborers and that 87 percent had been forced to take out for California because of the lack of work and the drought.

Analyzing these figures, Otis Durant Duncan, head of the sociology department at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, said they indicated:

quite strongly that migration has been resorted to by Oklahomans as a means of trying to find a living wage. Droughts, lack of work, poor health, inadequate earnings when employed, mechanization of productive processes, and many other forces have driven the people who have been displaced from the economic system of Oklahoma to other points in a desperate search for livelihood. When all these things happen to a man at once it is little wonder that he becomes an "Okie."

This comes from the same Oklahoman sociologist who startled the vested critics of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* by declaring, "I have been asked quite often if I could not dig up statistics capable of refuting the story of *Grapes of Wrath*. It cannot be done, for all the available data proved beyond doubt that the general impression given by Steinbeck's book is substantially reliable."

Perhaps the case of the "Okie" was most clearly expressed by Otis Nation, representative of the UCAPAWA and state organizer of the Oklahoma Tenant Farmers Union, at a recent hearing by the Farm Security Administration.

Otis Nation was Tom Joad himself, returning to his home state after he had been "everywhere, wherever you look, wherever there's a fight so hungry people can eat . . . wherever there's a cop beatin' up a guy. . . ." Nation told how he had been forced to take out from Oklahoma "with my wife and two kids and one on the way, after reading stories about the land of milk and honey . . . and found when I got there the bees had left out and the cows had gone plum dry."

The CIO organizer made the problem as plain as a whisky glass on Sunday morning:

We have got to get together and make homeowners out of the tenant farmers, the sharecroppers, and agricultural workers. It will mean something to us folks then when we speak of the Constitution. We will have something. We will be part of it. We will know what the word democracy means from having it. We will have kids that are healthy and well fed, and that's democracy too. When we stop worrying about foreign wars and worry more about our own American refugees, blowed, tractored, and Triple-A'ed off their land, then we'll be on the road to reclaiming the Joads and potential Joads and closing the twentieth century "trail of tears" leading to California or any other place where they say is work.

Another thing is as clear as the sun: the Oklahoma farmer has the craving for land so deep he can taste it. Thousands of tenant farmers come to meetings of their newly formed union to discuss the pros, cons, and by-Gods of obtaining their own land. And as one farmer put it, "most of it is the by-Gods!"

This hunger for land is the bright red thread of those people's lives, a bedrock affirmation. Together with the demand for bread and work, land is the muscled premise of the "Okies." Neither for themselves nor their wives nor their children will they take no for an answer. The grassroots are stirring.

ELI JAFFE.



Mischa Richter

The Scrap Iron Chancellor

FDR Signs the Treaty of Uvalde

The President and Mr. Garner bury the hatchet—in John Q. Public. Playing poker with the evil old man of Texas. Hunger is the croupier.

Washington, D. C.

THE President has thought long and hard on the problem of unemployment and apparently come to the conclusion that Miss Dorothy Thompson was right after all. To a number of recent visitors he has suggested that the estimate (supplied by government economists) of ten to twelve million unemployed was all wet. His approach has been less statistical than that of the *Herald Tribune's* Cassandra. He has simply related a number of genial little anecdotes about college girl friends of the family who have \$10,000 incomes and are nevertheless counted as jobless because they are looking for work. By the simple process of multiplying the number of these well-to-do young ladies he has achieved results no less startling than Miss Thompson's.

To other visitors who have been annoyingly insistent about the need for new social legislation the President has been more blunt. He has told them that they will have to wait a year, two years, perhaps longer, that this is not the time to spend huge sums on WPA or NYA. There are still irrepressible hopefuls who believe or try to believe that the President is simply trimming his sails for the elections. The President has made it plain, however, in private conversations that the war is the real reason for the indefinite adjournment of the New Deal.

At recent press conferences the President has not been quite so frank. He has consistently refused to comment on current legislation on the ground that these matters are pending before Congress. With the exception of his various reorganization orders, the domestic measures on which the President has made flat commitments at this session are surprisingly few. Nevertheless, he has developed a strategy for handling the major issues now before Congress.

Ever since the passage of the Wagner act and the Wage-Hour Act there has been a reactionary drive to rip them to pieces. The danger that the Barden amendments to the Wage-Hour law and the Smith amendments to the Wagner act would pass at this session has been serious, of course. It would be a mistake to overlook that. But it would be just as much a mistake to overlook some of the real obstacles facing the Tories. An election year is not the best season for scuttling social legislation outright. This is where the President comes in. The administration's answer to the reactionary onslaught on the measures it once sponsored has been to work out a series of "moderate" compromise proposals—which have substantially increased the chances of passing crippling amendments. If the maximum program of the reactionaries were defeated, they could fall back on the administra-

tion's "moderate" proposals to fix them up.

Defeat of the Wage-Hour amendments demonstrated that Congress was scared stiff of antagonizing organized labor at this time. Certainly the administration gave the dime-an-hour bloc a break with its Norton amendments to the Wage-Hour Act. More than that the bloc got in an entering wedge for more sweeping amendments. Then the special interest groups, egged on by the lobbyists in the galleries and in the corridors, outdid themselves. Through amendments they exempted everything from the dead horse industry to the packing and canning industries. The boys later got scared of the seven day legislative wonder they had produced, and turned it down. (Incredible confusion and bedlam should be added as an important part of the picture.) In addition, the increased appropriations in the farm bill, to come up next week, were used as an important bargaining point by the congressmen who were trying to save the act. For all this the administration cannot take much credit. And labor can hardly sit back and rely on a fortuitous combination of circumstances of this kind to save the Wagner act from amendment or to result in a substantial increase of WPA appropriations.

Only a few weeks ago Mrs. Norton announced unequivocal opposition to any amendments to the Wagner act at this session. Then she visited the White House. The next day the House Labor Committee began to draft amendments. Mrs. Norton undoubtedly tries to be loyal to labor, but she also tries to be loyal to Frank Hague and Franklin Roosevelt. The rapid shifts and reversals that follow are sometimes a little confusing. The Norton amendments, it is true, do not go as far as the Smith amendments in taking the guts out of the Wagner act in terms of either policy or enforcement. But the Norton amendments represent a dangerous compromise plan.

Reactionary as the Smith amendments are, it is an interesting paradox that the Norton amendments go much further in discriminating against and perhaps wrecking industrial unions. Smith can afford to be impartial. He is against all labor unions. The formula in the Smith bill for handling disputes between the CIO and the AFL is the Garrison proposal to take jurisdiction away from the Labor Board. The conflicting unions would have to settle their own differences. The CIO has begun to view this plan with not unfriendly interest. But the Norton amendments give the craft union bureaucrats an almost insuperable advantage over industrial unions, whether affiliated with the CIO or the AFL. For example, the CIO can win an overwhelming majority in General Mo-

tors. It can sign a contract with the company. But under the Norton amendments any time the AFL big shots choose they can force GM to recognize four or five machinists or molders or carpenters as a separate bargaining unit.

It will be recalled that last year the most crucial difference on the relief issue between the administration and the reactionary coalition of Garner Democrats and Republicans was over the restrictions on WPA imposed by the Woodrum committee. There was no substantial dispute over the amount of the appropriation. Even then the President had asked for so little that the Tories willingly accepted his estimate. This year he started by asking \$500,000,000 less than last year's woefully inadequate appropriation. Later, in his letter to Congress, he asked for permission to spend the \$975,000,000 in the budget over an eight-month period. At best this would amount to the same as was appropriated last year. But of course the President's letter does not commit him to expend the funds in eight months. The only definite commitment he made was that he did not object in principle to the Woodrum amendment requiring that funds must be spent over a specified period. Colonel Harrington followed up by stating that he no longer objected to the eighteen-month clause or the 25 per cent requirement on local communities. There will be a big relief fight at this session. The contending sides will not be the administration and the economy bloc.

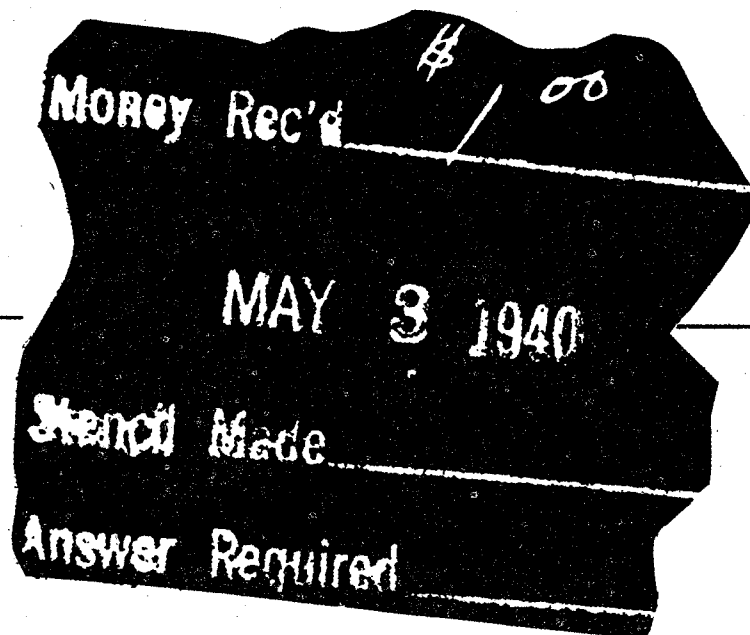
No wonder the celebrated peace pact between the administration Democrats and the Garner supporters was signed in the White House. In the congressional hurly-burly of debate on vital issues the dividing line in the Democratic Party is gradually being erased. There is indeed a real basis for party harmony. The President has shown his erstwhile adversaries that he is willing to meet them more than halfway. But the millions of workers and farmers who made the New Deal a great popular mass movement signed no peace pact. They will continue to fight for the preservation of social legislation—White House agreements to the contrary notwithstanding.

ADAM LAPIN.

Mix It with Seltzer

"HE DID NOT dwell long on the war itself, however. Peace, he held, was bound to follow—'war is only made in order to obtain peace.'"—*New York "Times" report on Dr. Paul Van Zeeland's speech to the American section of the International Chamber of Commerce.*

"IF I HAD A PRAYER" ...



Dear New Masses:

I wish I could give more.

As a newspaper man I pick up the Masses every week to find out what was spiked on the cable and telegraph desks.

If I had a prayer it would be to keep your weekly alive and shouting forever.

I hope that you get a lot more one-buck guys like me. A few thousand of us can do the job, and I know that there are thousands. One piece of green a week isn't missed too much.

And I hate to be anonymous.

FOR THREE WEEKS the life of **New Masses** has been in the balance. Hundreds of readers like the above newspaperman have pulled us through this acute crisis. But the magazine is still in grave danger. This week total contributions approached the \$15,000 mark; \$10,000 more to go to reach our minimum of \$25,000 to pay off our pressing creditors. This last \$10,000 is as necessary for our existence as the first \$15,000. **We cannot survive the summer months unless it is raised.** Instead of being on the brink of annihilation, as we were three weeks ago, we are one step away—a terribly short step. We have a simple proposal for raising the last \$10,000 and ending the drive. The above letter has the right idea—"a lot more one-buck guys." **A dollar each from ten thousand readers will do the trick.** The life of your best friend—**New Masses**—depends on a dollar. Just one dollar. Whether or not you have already contributed, send that dollar now.

(Please turn to page 28)

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Production and Profits

PROFITS and production are still running away from each other, profits going up, production going down. The decline in the latter, however, is now proceeding at a slow pace and a gradual leveling-off process is expected into the summer months. The Federal Reserve Board index of industrial production dropped from its all-time peak of 128 in December to 119 in January, 109 in February, and 103 in March. The final April figure is expected to be about 101.

But the gravy of profits continues its copious flow. Bethlehem Steel and Chrysler had the largest net profits for any three months in their history, du Pont the second largest. The May report of the National City Bank shows that first-quarter net profits of 340 leading industrial companies were 74 percent higher than in the corresponding period last year. The biggest profits were registered in industries closely linked to war production: metals, machinery and equipment, and petroleum. First-quarter dividends of various companies, as compiled by the *New York Times*, totaled \$851,901,802, compared with \$750,997,590 in the first quarter of 1939, a rise of more than 13 percent.

Profits, furthermore, are continuing to outstrip both production and wages. During 1939 total net profits of 2,480 leading companies rose 63 percent. This contrasts with a 22 percent increase in industrial production, a 5 percent increase in national income paid out, a 5 percent increase in cash farm income, and a 5 percent rise in total salaries and wages (including salaries of the big shots). Yet while both production and profits are not far below the 1929 peak, capitalism can find no use for about twelve million men and women who are without jobs.

The rise in production in the last quarter of 1939 was due largely to the expectation of a war boom which failed to materialize. While certain industries have profited from war orders, others have suffered from the loss of foreign markets. For the farmers the war has proved a real calamity. "The spreading European war," stated the *Wall Street Journal* of May 2, "is apparently costing American farmers, with the exception of the cotton growers, more than \$10,000,000 a month."

American big business, however, continues to put its chips on a war boom. "The German move into Scandinavia," states the May report of the National City Bank, "was the signal for a firming of commodity prices of

the kind which occurred last September, although naturally much less pronounced; and in a number of industries new orders picked up."

The fact is that capitalist economy, despite recoveries in 1936-37 and in the fall of 1939, has for more than ten years been in a state of chronic crisis. Economically the crisis finds its sharpest expression in the continued stagnation of the durable-goods industries, socially in the gap between production and employment. The narcotic of war, even should it succeed in giving a temporary fillip to heavy industry and employment, ultimately can only intensify the fundamental maladies of the system.

"Little Steel" Must Obey

THE Walsh-Healey law, passed in 1936, is less familiar to the public than the Wage-Hour and Wagner acts. Briefly described, it requires companies that fill US government contracts to the value of \$10,000 to pay the wages prevailing in those localities where the supplies are produced. Over a year ago seven "Little Steel" companies halted enforcement of the law by obtaining an injunction in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The US Supreme Court has overthrown this injunction by ruling that Little Steel must obey the act. It was an eight-to-one decision, the diehard Justice McReynolds dissenting. This means that 200,000 workers in open-shop steel firms, including Bethlehem and Republic, will benefit from the wage rates prevailing in union mills. No longer can these firms rely on their substandard-wage advantage in competitive bidding on government contracts. Tom Girdler and his friends have lost a battle to the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, which initiated the campaign to force Little Steel to observe the law.

The court's decision, written by Justice Hugo L. Black, should be studied by senators before they vote on the Walter-Logan bill recently passed by the House. That measure proposes to turn over to the courts, through "judicial review" rights, a great chunk of power delegated by Congress to federal agencies. For more than a year, Justice Black points out, the government was stopped by a court injunction from enforcing the Walsh-Healey act, a clearly constitutional law embodying the declared policy of Congress. It is this brand of chloroform that the Walter-Logan sponsors would apply to 130 regulatory agencies.

Labor News Not in the News

SOMETIMES we wonder whether we have lost our nose for news. We thought that letter Ben Gold, head of the furriers' union, sent Attorney General Jackson on May 1 was front page stuff. It revealed startling collusion between the anti-union manufacturers and the sanctimonious Department of Justice to railroad Mr. Gold and others in the "anti-trust" prosecutions. The labor leader discusses the evidence on page 3 of this issue.

But not one commercial paper considered it worth a stick of type. Maybe we're wrong, but to us it was news of A-No. 1 caliber, of concern to every American citizen.

In fact it was a pretty vile-smelling business, this conspiracy between the President's D. of J. and the employers who seek to lower the wage scale and to crack unionism. Only an atrophied nose could fail to detect the odor; but then on second thought, it cannot be that Mr. Roy Howard has an atrophied nose. Consider the way he played the Scalise and Bioff news. He and his fellow publishers were Johnny-on-the-spot there. These were pretty smelly cases, too, cases of racketeering in labor, and the headlines were ample. Why? Could it be that the publishers saw an opportunity here to smear labor on the basis of a phenomenon untypical to labor? All workingmen want to see unions rid of the mobsters and it is to the everlasting shame of William Green that he hasn't followed the wishes of the rank and file.

Westbrook Pegler's crusade against Bioff and Scalise has motives other than shining justice, in view of his recent column plumping for the glories of company unionism—the star-spangled "American" way. And what about the Thurman Arnold offensive against unions on the basis of the Sherman act? Might it not be considered news that the AFL is striking back, as, for example, in Pennsylvania? No, on reconsideration it's not a nose for news the publishers want; it's a heart for the needs of the people they lack.

Chamber Music Blues

WHAT price business confidence? US Chamber of Commerce leaders answered that last week in their annual convention. They didn't even mention the seven-figure profits currently studding the financial news reports. "Confidence," it seems, needs more than dollar signs. It demands that Congress balance the budget, throw WPA into the dustbin, tear up the Wage-Hour law, pare down the Wagner act, reduce taxes—and hooray for the army and navy. Enact this "humanitarian and liberal" program, pleaded the Chamber in a series of weepy resolutions, and we'll try to get our confidence up again.

Europe's war provided the new, important note. Dr. Paul van Zeeland, former prime minister of Belgium, rather unnecessarily invited the American section of the International Chamber to plan for US capitalism's role in the "reconstruction" of post-war Europe. He didn't ask us to come into the war now; he merely mentioned our "insecurity" and likened Norway to Bleeding Belgium. Mr. C. M. Wynne of Chicago, director of Overseas Industries, Inc., said it would be nice if our government used all that gold buried in Kentucky as a base for loans to belligerents. International Business Machines' president, Thomas J. Watson, announced that a committee for economic peace had been established by the International Chamber and the Carnegie Endowment for

International Peace. Representatives on the committee from various nations will "facilitate exchange of goods," i.e., try to slice the melon more evenly among rival imperialists. Practically everyone was for bigger national defense and a better merchant marine. No definite date for M-day was announced in the Chamber's publicity releases; probably the delegates feel they can trust That Man in the White House to settle this point.

Who Are the "Aliens"?

NEARLY a hundred anti-alien bills are still pending in Congress. Their authors will likely try to jam many of them through in these final weeks before adjournment. If they succeed, the constitutional rights of all Americans, not only the foreign born, will be restricted. One of these measures, the Dempsey bill, for example, would deport non-citizens who belong to organizations advocating "any change in the American form of government." Obviously this definition could be made to cover any group disapproved of by Martin Dies or J. Edgar Hoover—as what progressive group isn't? Over two hundred prominent Americans, including Dr. Franz Boas, Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Robert Morss Lovett, recently signed a Declaration to Congress which points out that:

War conditions throughout the world today increase the danger of acts of intolerance and prejudice against the foreign born similar to those which culminated in the Palmer raids of 1920. Non-citizens are being dismissed from their jobs and intimidated by threats of discrimination, deportation, concentration camps, fingerprinting, and registration. The non-citizen is being wrongly blamed for unemployment, crime, espionage, and sabotage. . . .

In a remarkable statement linking crime, radicalism, and the foreign born, J. Edgar Hoover recently sneered at the "international pirate masquerading as a self-appointed savior of a country whose language he can barely speak." The implication is plain enough: anyone who believes, like Abraham Lincoln, that the people have a right to determine their own form of government, is a "furriner" and a crook. The FBI chief has voiced the spirit and intention of the anti-alien bills being considered by Congress.

Follies of 1916

THE "Beast of Berlin" is back in the news. It isn't Kaiser Wilhelm this time—whose anti-Soviet tirades get respectful attention from today's press lords—but Adolf Hitler. A million-dollar reward for the Fuehrer's capture has been offered by Samuel Harden Church, Carnegie Institute president, and a group of wealthy Pittsburghers. Hitler, according to Mr. Church, is solely responsible for the war, being "consumed with the desire of conquering the world." If he were caught and tried by a court of "civilized" nations, all aggression would cease. It won't do to dismiss

this fantastically childish scheme as a publicity stunt that will cost Mr. Church and his friends nothing, since their money would be safe even if the offer weren't limited to the month of May. Big city dailies featured the reward, accompanied by the Church statement, on their front pages. While some editorials ridiculed the grandiose nature of the project, few analyzed the statement, which: (1) specified *only* Hitler as the "common enemy of mankind," thus exonerating Chamberlain, Daladier, Goering, et al.; (2) designated England as the nation to which the culprit should be brought for trial; (3) prophesied that Switzerland would soon be "overrun by the German Army"; and (4) sounded the alarm for immediate action. Mr. Church was not quite so outspoken as Duff Cooper in identifying Hitler with the German people; the papers merely reported him as not expecting "any anti-Hitler attempt within Germany."

Who would not love to see Nazism brought to justice? We would be the first to applaud the spectacle. But while we're about it why not try, for example, the men in other countries who backed Hitler until war actually started—the same men who now call for "total war" against the people of Germany? Mr. Church's limitation of blame to one individual and one nation amounts to war promotion for the Allies.

No Coincidence

Two big political trials ended last week on different sides of the Atlantic, but the objectives were the same. The American warmongers struck at the New York *Daily Worker*, the British at the London Communist organ. Both trials were presumably "libel cases." It was more than coincidence: both trials were wartime phenomena, differing slightly from the recent conviction of the French deputies.

Opposition to the robber war was the crime, libel the pretext. For example, the New York *Daily Worker* was named in the Liggett libel suit back in 1936, but the case did not emerge from the docket until today, with America sliding down the slope toward war. Thomas Dewey, aspiring for the presidency, pushed the conviction of Clarence Hathaway, editor of the *Daily Worker*. The case was considered too important to allow the average man to sit in judgment: a blue ribbon jury did the job. As Mr. Hathaway put it, "Dewey's neighbors, not mine, convicted me." Out of a total of 2,800 on the so-called special panel, 707 came from Mr. Dewey's 15th Assembly District. A stock salesman, a broker, an investment banker, a securities analyst passed judgment on a Communist. Fat chance for justice.

The case will be appealed, the constitutionality of the blue ribbon jury tactic challenged. All adherents to the Bill of Rights have a special concern in this case, for as Hathaway noted, it was not a conviction for criminal libel, "it is a verdict against a free press"—as much against the New York *Times*, the

Chicago *Daily News*, the San Francisco *Chronicle*—all papers—as against the *Daily Worker*.

The London trial awarded damages of £1,400 against the *Daily Worker*. There, Sir Walter Citrine, his majesty's man in Labor, brought suit against the Communist paper for saying what millions already know and believe: that the British Labor leaders were betraying the interests of the working class by condoning the suppression of the French syndicates and by endangering British unionism in supporting the war.

Meanwhile France rounded out the week of Communist persecution by creating a sort of political Devil's Island in the Atlantic. A group of 125 Communist deputies and government officials were shipped to a lonely rock known as the Island of Yeu. The severity of the drive against Communists is, in a big sense, an index of the support to their anti-war program. The brass hats eternally forget that ideas have a way of passing through bars and bridging oceans.

The Mexican Note

THE Mexican government has skillfully countered the demand of the US State Department that it arbitrate the oil dispute. It has rejected arbitration, timing its rejection for the day after it had split the united front of American oil companies by negotiating a separate agreement with the Sinclair interests. By this bold move the progressive administration of President Cardenas has served notice that it will not be intimidated by the bad neighbor policy which Yankee imperialism has been pursuing in Latin America. The note of Foreign Minister Hay maintained that the oil dispute was a domestic issue; it pointed out that the Mexican courts were still attempting to appraise the value of the properties expropriated.

The Sinclair interests represent 40 percent of the American oil investment. The Mexican note expressed readiness to make a similar settlement with the Standard Oil interests, which control the other 60 percent. The Mexican government has, however, always insisted that it will pay only for the physical equipment of the oil properties and has rejected the watered valuation of the American companies.

The dictatorial attitude of the Roosevelt administration toward Mexico has just evoked a protest from a group of prominent Americans, including Dr. Walter B. Cannon, Carey McWilliams, Louis Adamic, George Biddle, William Pickens, and others. The administration is, moreover, not confining itself to diplomatic pressure. With the assistance of Martin Dies it is secretly intervening in Mexican affairs in an effort to prevent the election to the Mexican presidency of Gen. Manuel Avila Camacho, candidate of the Party of the Mexican Revolution. The Mexican people want him, but the American oil companies and owners of huge landed estates (the largest of which belong to William Randolph Hearst) have other plans. That is why mili-

tary supplies are now being smuggled across the border in preparation for an uprising to be led by American imperialism's favorite son, Gen. Juan Almazan, friend of Vice President Garner. Will the American people tolerate a repetition of Woodrow Wilson's undeclared war against Mexico in 1915?

FDR in the Mediterranean

NO ONE begrudges the President his share of the humor that is due every mortal. But the country will laugh at him when he solemnly describes his mighty labors to keep the war from spreading. This is the man who encouraged the Finns to fight and ladled out the cash to keep them fighting—against the USSR. This is the same peace-loving statesman who insisted after Sumner Welles' return from Europe that he saw no immediate hope for peace. This is the valiant defender of small nations who did not lift a finger to avert the double-barreled rape of Denmark and Norway, who has not made the slightest criticism of the Allied efforts to spread the war all over Europe. The fact is that the President's intercession with Mussolini is simply an effort to keep Il Duce from entering the war on the wrong side, if he must do so at all. During the week of the terrific Allied setback in Norway, Italy's entrance into the war, or even the intensified Italian blackmail, would have meant adding both injury and insult to injury. In a sense Mr. Roosevelt was attempting with Il Duce what the British and French themselves are no longer quite able to do. One might almost say that Franklin D. Roosevelt is the new blood which the British Cabinet appears to need so badly.

But of course there is a mercenary interest in the whole business of the developing friendship for the Italians. American trade with Italy in the six months ending with February 1940 increased 54 percent. Cotton, chemicals, steel, petroleum mean good profits for the boys back home, even if some of these goods are unquestionably going to Germany. The British have shifted their trade routes from the Mediterranean and have ordered their merchant vessels out of the line of fire. But if Italy entered the war, American shipping would be barred under the Neutrality Act from the lucrative Mediterranean trade. That is at least one reason for the democratic President's intimacy with the dictator of fascist Italy.

British Labor's Chance

A GENERATION of British poets died in the first world war, but it would take a Milton to describe the "fen of stagnant waters" into which Britain's ruling class has plunged its people. The debacle in Norway, coming after the fiasco in Finland is not, in our opinion, an argument for pressing the war more vigorously. On the contrary. The decadence, the mean incompetence, of those men who destroyed the peace but cannot make the war only proves to us what misery and madness await the British and French people if they permit this war to continue.

The obvious hesitation to take the initiative in the Trondheim area when it might have greatly complicated matters for the Germans is much more than a blunder or miscalculation. It is an aspect of the degeneration of the very fabric of British society. And if the Labor Party had not so obscenely tied the working class to the chariot of these rotting empires, overripe for change, the Allied weakness, as revealed in the last few weeks, would be the opportunity, not for saving imperialism, but for overthrowing it; and by that overthrow encouraging the German and other peoples of Europe to end the scourge of war forever.

Before NEW MASSES is read this week the discussion in Parliament will be public knowledge. Certainly Mr. Chamberlain's speech last week was his most pitiful effort since his speech the day the war was declared. It is probable, despite the boom for Lloyd George in the Beaverbrook press and the chop-licking agitation in the Labor circles, that the Chamberlain crowd will retain control. Churchill has met his second Gallipoli; Anthony Eden, Duff Cooper, and all the others are of the same breed, those "best minds" of the British tory caste whose miserable strategy has boomeranged so fatefully upon the British people. We hope only that the rank and file of labor will make itself felt at the Bournemouth conference next week, that the great anger of the British people will assert itself, sweeping away the toadies and the traitors, revitalizing the only force that can save England from a future of degradation and violence. The same, of course, goes for France, where decisions await the outcome of the week in Britain.

Norwegian Balance Sheet

THERE is madness in the Chamberlain method, but some folk still suspect method in the madness. It is suggested that some ulterior motive underlay the betrayal of Norway, the reluctance to employ fully the vaunted navy and already considerable air force. It is quite true of course that in the balance sheet of the Norwegian campaign there are many negative entries for Germany. The extension of the front was not in the German interest. The powerful striking power of the Nazis arises from their central position in Europe, as contrasted with the Allied problem of ever grappling from the circumference.

True also, the Norwegian campaign employed a large number of German troops and substantially damaged Hitler's navy. Economically, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have been for years an important source of German supplies. Hitler gains only part of what he needs. At least two more alien peoples have been incorporated in the Reich, who, while they cannot see the Allies as their defenders, will nevertheless never be reconciled to German domination.

But of course the Germans have gained an important strategic victory. Air bases along the Norwegian coast enable them to prey

on Allied shipping and virtually reverse the blockade. Earlier in the war a German submarine proved the vulnerability of Scapa Flow; the aerial threat from Norway means that the Scottish naval bases are now useless. It is still unclear whether the Nazis did, in fact, sink a battleship of the Queen Elizabeth class and several minor craft. The British denial was lame and belated; if the ship did go down in thirty minutes as the Nazis claim, there will be some tall thinking among admirals everywhere.

But it is also true that the war is far from decided. Allied concentrations off their Egyptian and island bases in the Mediterranean indicate where they intend to push the battle. Much depends on Turkey where all the questions that impinge on the Balkans are by no means settled. The Nazis would rather not, at this stage, face the extension of fronts into the Balkans. Beyond Hungary, they run into problems which may involve Italy on the one hand and the USSR on the other, not to mention the Balkan peoples themselves.

The Germans have won a battle, demonstrated their strength, their mobility and initiative. But one must always bear in mind their inherent weaknesses, which even the domination of Europe would never nullify. Fascism is a cancer; the continual contamination of healthier tissues will postpone the inevitable, but only at the expense of extending the same disease. The ruling class in Britain and France will bear down further on their peoples, and if they are permitted, will endeavor to remake their empires in the totalitarian image. This then is the perspective of this war: a mockery of human dignity, an insult to human intelligence—reason enough why America must keep its distance from it.

Soviet-German Relations

A MOST significant sidelight on the Norwegian aftermath was the statement published by Tass, the official Soviet news agency, reporting an "exchange of information regarding Sweden's neutrality which took place a fortnight ago between the representatives of the USSR and Germany at Moscow in conformance with Article III of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. . . ." Both states, says Tass, "expressed themselves as interested in the preservation of Sweden's neutrality."

In our opinion, this is an important statement on Soviet-German relations, and the most meaningful interpretation must be the simplest one. The USSR is vitally concerned with the limitation of the imperialist war. Its most decisive action toward this end was the Soviet-German pact itself last August. Its treaties with the Baltic states, its support of the German peace offer last October, and the Soviet-Finnish peace were expressions of the fundamental Soviet aim of limiting the war. The Swedish people above all have reason to be thankful.

The Tass statement implies that if the

Allied powers, and their American friends, calculated to destroy the normal relations between the USSR and Germany by forcing Sweden into the war and spreading it in Scandinavia, they were mistaken. On the other hand, it should be observed that the Tass statement appeared considerably after the German military success in Norway had itself assured Sweden's staying out of the war, at least for a time. Thus the USSR is stressing the formal as well as the normal character of Soviet-German relations.

John Bull's Gandhi

THE rope climbing trick is as nothing compared to Mohandas K. Gandhi's talent for climbing into the bosom of British imperialism. A little over a week after the working committee of the All-India Nationalist Congress issued a call to prepare for a campaign of civil disobedience to win independence for India, Gandhi issued a statement practically calling it off and disclaiming any "desire whatsoever to embarrass the British, especially at a time when it is a question of life and death for them." Thus Gandhi decrees life for British imperialism, death for Indian independence.

In March the plenary session of the Congress at Ramgarh adopted a resolution branding the war as imperialist. It declared:

Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and dominion status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure.

Gandhi participated in the Congress session. He also participated in the deliberations of the working committee which on April 18 issued the call to prepare for civil disobedience. Gandhi indicated his approval. Britain replied in iron-fisted fashion. Sir Hugh O'Neill, undersecretary of state for India, told the House of Commons that, "If civil disobedience unfortunately is adopted, his majesty's government will be bound to take full measures to counteract it." Only now it appears that one of those measures was to use Gandhi, as in 1922 and 1931, to disrupt the movement from within.

But though Gandhi may be all-powerful in the Congress, there is a greater power than even he or his London masters: the 360,000,000 people of India. Strikes and anti-war demonstrations are sweeping the country. The arrest of such men as R. S. Nimbkar, general secretary of the Girni Kamgar Union, and Jai Prakash Narain, one of the Socialist Party leaders, has only served to heighten anti-imperialist hatred. Yet the damage that Gandhi can do is undoubtedly great. The Indian workers and peasants still have the task of freeing themselves from the influence of those treacherous elements that have saved England in every crisis.

Readers' Forum

The War Danger

TO NEW MASSES:—Your April 23 issue struck me as a powerful warning to everyone to be aware of the greater war danger facing America since the recent events in Scandinavia.

No doubt more than one factor was involved in the Allied failure to prevent Germany's march into Norway. But I believe it quite possible that the Allies intended to permit Germany to get the jump on them. By acting slowly the Allies have made it appear that not their mining of Norway's waters, but the "aggressiveness" of Germany is responsible for turning Scandinavia into a battlefield. The Allies are now in the position to cry out that they are fighting to restore Norway to the Norwegians, and, before long, may also be able to claim that they are warring to restore Sweden to the Swedes.

The Allies may now hope that the millions of Scandinavians in the United States, grouped largely in the isolationist West, will become strongly pro-Allied. And since American sentiment has always been very friendly to Scandinavia, here is an opportunity for the Allies to make easier the work of their American friends for still greater economic aid to the Allies, and for eventual involvement of America. As your editorial article, "A Policy for the American People," so well put it, "Indeed, the [Roosevelt] administration seems not at all dissatisfied with the course of events" in Scandinavia. And already pro-war elements in this country have stated bluntly that American intervention will be necessary to extricate the Allies, and, of course, to save "democracy."

That the Allied leaders and their American supporters should be willing to gamble so recklessly with the fate of the Scandinavian peoples for the purpose of swinging the United States into the war may appear to some far-fetched and unbelievably shocking. It is certainly diabolical. But it is no less diabolical than the machinations and depraved "chess-playing" of Allied leaders and their American supporters that went on secretly prior to American involvement in 1917.

I believe that the Allies, in forcing Scandinavia into the war, had their eye not only on a northern battlefield, but also considered it a vital step in their plans to get Americans on the European battlefields.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

MORRIS KAMMAN.

Whither Sir Stafford Cripps?

TO NEW MASSES:—I found the article, "In Darkest India," by Gerald Griffin, Jr., indeed revealing.

Of special interest is Mr. Griffin's reference to Sir Stafford Cripps. For two years prior to the outbreak of the second edition of the World War, I received the publication *Tribune* (London). This is a militant socialist weekly, always first in defense of Russian policies, always advocating a united front at home.

On Jan. 9, 1939, Sir Stafford submitted to Mr. Middleton, British labor leader, a memorandum in which he called for a united front among progressives and trade unions for a defeat of the national government (Chamberlain). There was no question of sincerity of purpose in the above memorandum, and the subsequent presentation of facts in the *Tribune*, of which Sir Stafford is a contributing editor. As I have not received the

Tribune since September last, imagine my chagrin in discerning in Mr. Griffin's article strong aspersions that Sir Stafford was in India doing the bidding of Chamberlain.

New York City.

F. S.

[NEW MASSES has received several queries with regard to Sir Stafford Cripps, the well known left wing labor figure. Our article by Gerald Griffin, Jr. (NEW MASSES, Feb. 27, 1940), repeated a question that was being widely asked in London about the purpose of Sir Stafford's recent visits to India, China, and Moscow. We do not know the purposes of Sir Stafford's visits. But it is true that when he left Britain for India, the *London Times*, considered a semi-official organ of the Chamberlain government, strongly denied that he was in any way carrying out a government mission in India. This denial was itself so surprising that questions were raised in many circles, questions which our correspondent described in his article.

We can only observe that upon Sir Stafford's arrival in this country on his way to Britain the *New York Herald Tribune* for April 3 said: "Sir Stafford will stay at the British Embassy while he is in Washington." Leonard Lyons, in his *New York Post* column for April 13, said: "Sir Stafford showed [his biographer] the 300,000 word official diary of the trip with his recommendations to his majesty's government concerning India and China." On April 15 the same columnist said: "Sir Stafford Cripps, who will return to London this week to report on his mission to India, will recommend dominion status." Readers will have to draw their own conclusions.—THE EDITORS.]

Binns on the AEF in Siberia

TO NEW MASSES:—Recently I came across a copy of Archie Binns' *The Laurels Are Cut Down* (Reynal & Hitchcock, 1937). This is a powerfully written book based upon the experiences of the US expeditionary force under General Graves in Siberia in 1918. I feel that it is most important to bring this book to the attention of NEW MASSES readers, in the light of present world events.

Through the character of an American soldier of pioneer descent who enlisted to fight in France and instead found himself in Siberia, we get the true story of English, French, and Japanese assistance to the Cossacks. We learn of General Graves' firm stand on neutrality and of his ingenuity in resisting various traps to be drawn in with the Allies. Harrowing details are given of the treatment of Russian non-Bolshevik peasants by the Cossacks, and of the attitude of the Red Cross to these sufferers. And finally we are made to realize the feeling of disillusionment and futility with which our American soldiers returned.

Upon communication with Mr. Binns I learned that General Graves had sent a note of approval after the book's publication.

New York City.

MARTHA ALLEN.

ILD Note

TO NEW MASSES:—In line with the campaign we have inaugurated to bring about the release of J. B. McNamara, we are attempting to locate copies of letters written by McNamara to anyone at any time. Will NEW MASSES readers please forward any such letters or copies of them to the Northern California District of the ILD at 83 McAllister St., San Francisco, Calif.

San Francisco, Calif.

MINI CARSON.
Executive Secretary.

The American White Paper

Bruce Minton reviews Alsop's and Kintner's apology for Roosevelt's foreign policy. An official-unofficial document.

AMERICAN WHITE PAPER, by Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner. Simon & Schuster. \$1.

THE modest claim made by the publishers of *American White Paper* is that Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner "stole a march on history" by telling "the kind of story that usually stays on ice for twenty years." In other words, here is the real "inside" history of American foreign policy from Munich to the outbreak of the imperialist war.

Of course, Alsop and Kintner don't consider the war "imperialist," but that is another matter. If they actually have added new information, the reader can draw his own conclusions from the facts. The newspapers have made much of this signal addition to our knowledge. But what, on analysis, do the authors contribute?

For one thing, it seems that the upstairs study in the White House is an easy, comfortable room, full of books and prints—something this reviewer did not know. For another, on the afternoon of April 13, 1939, Secretary of State Hull and his assistant, Sumner Welles, brought the midday cables from Europe to the President's office. And again, Hull's language (he lives at the Carlton Hotel in Washington, D. C.) is extremely salty. Did you know that Roosevelt once consulted Vice President Garner on the proper ingredients for an old-fashioned cocktail? Or that some time after Ambassador Kennedy telephoned from London, with tears in his eyes, to announce Great Britain's declaration of war against Germany, President Roosevelt went back to sleep?

The until-now-unrecorded items that Alsop and Kintner have vouchsafed us with such fanfare are not only trivial but often momentarily dull. They add details of the most colossal insignificance—on the weather, on private conversations of no importance whatsoever, on historical moments that are not history making. The meat of their book they filched from the newspapers. They have pasted together news releases from Washington, excerpts from the President's important messages, a few of the better known anecdotes that have been going the rounds for the last months, and have added to this hodgepodge some minor gossip of indifferent relevance.

BAD REPORTING

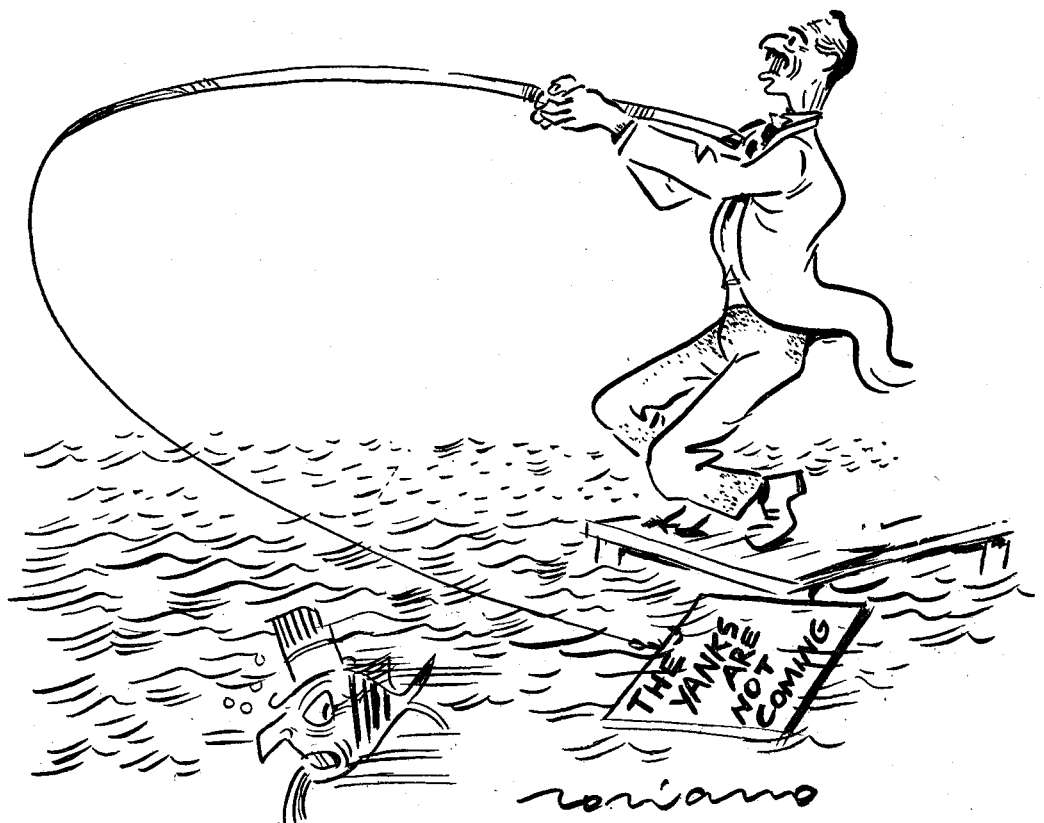
Even as reporting, then, let alone as history, *American White Paper* is not what it is cracked up to be. Alsop and Kintner have overlooked the most significant facts of the crisis days they are supposedly discussing.

While they write about the appeasement policy of Great Britain and France, they carefully avoid any analysis of what appeasement meant. Was it only, as they say, the reflection of the anxiety of Daladier and Chamberlain to propitiate Germany in order to preserve peace? Or were there more far-reaching ends to be gained? Is it not now all too clear that appeasement had as its goal the promotion of an anti-Soviet war? Was not the sanction granted Hitler when he seized Austria, when along with Mussolini he invaded Spain, when he marched into Czechoslovakia and Memel, in the nature of a bribe for the establishment of a "peace in our time" which would provide the setting for the holy war against socialism? Yet once it is admitted that an attack on the USSR was the aim of the appeasers, it becomes clear that when Soviet strength and strategy frustrated this plot, the Allies found themselves in a situation of their own making in which their imperialist position could be preserved only by war. Certainly war did not break out because, as Alsop and Kintner so glibly state, a "one-man jury" so decided; rather it was the result of the encouragement granted by France and Great Britain to German aggression. War came when the rival imperial-

ism of Germany refused any longer to do the bidding of the Western powers that had armed and abetted fascism.

But such an admission would have led the two "historians" to the conclusion that both sides in the present war are brigands and that the war is an imperialist conflict. The admission would hardly be acclaimed by the sponsors of *American White Paper* in Washington. Nor would such an acknowledgement serve as a convincing argument to persuade the American people that their "duty" is to rush to the aid of the Allies. It is better apple polishing for Alsop and Kintner to advance the administration's thesis which rests on the sweet-sounding concept that the present struggle is being waged between the forces of "good" and "evil." Nice old muddled Neville, tricked by the villain Hitler, is at last carrying the torch of democracy, liberty, and what have you. Ergo, the United States should help the naive but terribly decent British ruling class, just as President Roosevelt says we should.

But Alsop and Kintner are careful not to lay their cards too openly on the table. They disguise their purpose by the pretense that here at last is the real "inside news." But for all their exclusive knowledge, they seem



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only too willing to accept trustingly the handouts of the British Foreign Office. If, as they claimed they had done, they had taken the trouble to check their information, the Treasury Department could have told them that the assets of Great Britain and France in this country are larger by six billion dollars (at least) than they state. If they had been eager to arrive at truth, they would have given the record of Sumner Welles, whom they portray as a righteous, peace-loving, if somewhat arrogant, aristocrat. They would have admitted that Alsop receives information for his daily column direct from Welles, for which service he is known to give his benefactor a more than generous "break" whenever possible. They would have discussed the financial and political connections of policy makers in the State Department, the role of James C. Dunn, for example, or of J. P. Moffat. They would tell of William Bullitt's almost pathological hate of the Soviet Union, and of Joseph Kennedy's ties with Chamberlain. They would have mentioned the influence on the administration of the Wall Street spokesmen who—so we understand from an impeccable source available to all—are not timid in making their wishes known to the White House. They would have stated flatly that Roosevelt is determined to assure an Allied victory at all costs even to the point of dragging this country into war. They would have expanded their remarks on the Panama Conference where American imperialism began to show its hand, now that Great Britain is involved in war. They would admit that when they talk of a German-Soviet "alliance" they are deliberately and consciously spreading an untruth for the purpose of justifying the anti-Soviet policies pursued so eagerly by the administration.

DELIBERATE HOAX

American White Paper is not history. The record has been left deliberately incomplete, deliberately perverted. Yet the hoax is important. Primarily, the authors, with the blessings of the right people, are apologists for the present foreign policy of the United States. In the guise of "objectively" reporting the course of American diplomacy, with the bait that here at last is the lowdown on what is going on, *American White Paper* justifies every warlike move made by Roosevelt and his underlings. The administration's "neutrality" is never questioned; nor are patently unneutral actions challenged. Alsop and Kintner do their utmost to conceal the very unpleasant reality that "all aid short of war" leads to this country's involvement and therefore to participation in war. This collection of revelations that do not reveal, hailed so loudly by the pro-war press, has as its one purpose not to inform but to trick the reader into accepting the authors'—and the administration's—meretricious conclusion that an Allied victory is to the interest of the American people, that if an Allied victory should be menaced, it is the unchallengeable duty of our people to sacrifice, to bleed, and to die

in defense of British and French—and American—imperialism.

American White Paper is dishonest and venal. It is propaganda designed to please the authors' patrons in Washington. The book has done an inestimable service to the proponents of war. It would have been far too embarrassing for the administration to have undertaken the printing and distribution of this book for itself.

BRUCE MINTON.

Education of a Liberal

A LIBERAL IN WARTIME: THE EDUCATION OF ALBERT DESILVER, by Walter Nelles. Edited by Lewis Gannett. Introduction by Roger Baldwin. W. W. Norton. \$2.50.

ECONOMIC and political developments of the past two decades have made the old type of liberal who centered his philosophy around the doctrine of *laissez-faire* something of a rarity and, indeed, something of an anachronism. But the type of liberal who stresses free speech and civil liberties is still very much with us; and so long as he sticks to his principles, he must be accounted an extremely useful citizen.

Albert DeSilver, born to wealth and a conventional upbringing, educated at exclusive private schools, and at Yale elected to one of America's most patrician clubs, the famous Skull and Bones, nonetheless became one of the outstanding civil liberties liberals in this country during the period of the first world war and the post-war madness. In the early fall of 1917 DeSilver joined the Directing Committee of the National Civil Liberties Bureau and a year or so later resigned from his respectable downtown law firm to devote more time to the work of the Bureau. In October of 1918, when Roger Baldwin was arrested for refusing to comply with the conscription act, DeSilver assumed the position of associate director of the Bureau, which in 1920 changed its name to the American Civil Liberties Union.

In the education of Albert DeSilver no single event, according to Mr. Nelles, "more shocked his conservatism than the suppression of the radical weekly, the *Masses*," which Postmaster General Burleson excluded from the mails in 1917. DeSilver contributed substantially to the *Masses* fight in this case, writing the magazine:

It so happens that I am not a "revolutionary"—if that term has any meaning—but a most law-abiding sort of soul, and accordingly I find the *Masses* prodigiously irritating at times and by the same token pleasing at others. But my law-abiding neck gets very warm under its law-abiding collar these days at the extraordinary violations of fundamental laws which are being put over. Accordingly your fight assumes an importance which makes it imperative that it be concluded.

Later, in 1918, DeSilver furnished the cash bail for John Reed when the latter, on his return from Soviet Russia, was arrested un-

der the federal indictment against the editors of the *Masses*.

After the Civil Liberties Bureau's publication of a pamphlet defending the rights of 166 members of the IWW under indictment at Chicago, the superpatriots multiplied their demands for the Bureau's suppression. On the first day of September 1918 ten armed agents of the Department of Justice raided its offices in New York City and carried off all the letters and documents they could find to the respectable and reactionary Union League Club, of all places! For a time there seemed to be a chance that the members of the Directing Committee, including DeSilver, would be indicted. DeSilver and most of the others stood firm. And finally the case faded away.

In 1920 Albert DeSilver's education had progressed to the point where he voted for Eugene V. Debs for President on the Socialist ticket. But in 1923 he took a sharp turn away from his political and civil liberties interests by becoming very much engrossed in the study of chemistry at Columbia. About a year later he resigned from active work in the Civil Liberties Union to give all his time to his newly discovered world of chemistry. A few months afterward, in his thirty-sixth year, he met instant death in a senseless tragedy, being catapulted out of an open door while walking through a speeding express train.

It is difficult to say what would have been the course of Albert DeSilver's life had it not been cut short. Unquestionably he was growing in his understanding of basic social and economic forces all during the time of his association with the ACLU. And he showed no signs of going back on his principles during a crisis, though hoisting the white flag in the face of pressure is one of the marked characteristics of liberals as a group. There is good ground for believing, I think, that, when during the war hysteria of 1939-40 the controlling majority in the Civil Liberties Union betrayed the fundamental principles of the organization by adopting purge resolutions and holding heresy trials, Albert DeSilver would have stood by his guns.

CORLISS LAMONT.

Drama Source Book

MASTERS OF THE DRAMA, by John Gassner. New York. Random House. \$3.75.

MR. GASSNER is one of the most erudite of present-day commentators on the theater, and his enormous volume is a source book for any student of the stage. Here presented for the reader's guidance is the entire history of the theater, from its earliest days down to the most recent Theater Guild production; there are excellent summaries of the plot material of every important play, illustrations, charts, indexes, and bibliography.

Of primary importance to the student of the drama are Mr. Gassner's considerations of the relative importance of his playwrights, the tendencies they represent, and the means

by which they reflected their times and the social life of those times. For he is aware that no truly creative artist, in whatever field, is ever aloof from what is going on around him, and his dialectical understanding of the drama illuminates his evaluation of the playwrights he considers.

The difficulties of such a book as he has written seem insuperable; the task of compression almost impossible. Individual readers who are decently informed in the field may be disposed to argue some of Mr. Gassner's interpretations of individual talents, and the space he has given certain others. I personally feel that he has been overly considerate of such present-day writers as George S. Kaufman, Moss Hart, Edna Ferber, S. N. Behrman, and the other run-of-the-mill theatrical hacks, however clever they may be as stage technicians. But by and large he has done a valuable job of editorial analysis, and his critical judgment is generally sound.

ALVAH BESSIE.

Looking Backward

HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY, by Richard Llewellyn. The Macmillan Co. \$2.75.

WHEN a man of sixty looks back on the early years of his life, he often sees the picture through the haze of nostalgia. This may result in a sentimental romanticism which, in noticing mainly the sunlight and little of the shadow, distorts the truth. That is what happens in this recent best seller about a Welsh coal-mining valley at the turn of the century. And although the story is vigorously told in a simple Welsh idiom which often lifts itself into the singing tones of poetry, the book fails of a significance that it might have attained had that veil of homesick melancholia been lifted.

Huw Morgan, the teller of the story, now in his sixties, tries to recapture his past in the green Welsh coal-mining valley of his childhood. His tale has to do with small-town life among honest chapelgoing people in Victorian times and the slow but deep-rooted changes which take place. The focal point is Huw's own family, and if the members of that family run the whole gamut of human experience, the author gives to the emotions that these experiences call forth a kind of old-fashioned dignity and depth. Especially is the love story between Huw and Bronwen, his dead brother Ivor's wife, of fine and beautiful texture. There are also good scenes of life at school where the Welsh language is barred in favor of the ruling class English, of fighting, of drinking, of chapelgoing, and of Victorian moral smugness.

Yet there are strikes and labor disturbances: Huw's brother, Ivor, appears as a young radical; but Huw and his father and mother are definitely labor conservatives who misunderstand the nature of the workers' struggles. The narrator, for instance, regretting violence, attributes it to the miners; yet it is shown in the book how the small and fairly



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sympathetic mine owner is replaced by a harsher, less human, and colder corporation which actually causes the miserable conditions leading to violence. Huw regrets also the new revolutionary fever, which is just beginning to grip the workers, and the use of the names Marx and Engels in their discussions. No causes for labor conflict are indicated.

The conclusion is especially weak; and it is weak because of the author's backward-looking view of life, his yearning for the "good old days" when *laissez-faire* was still alive. The novel ends on a symbolic note: the family has been broken up and slag heaps cover the slopes of a once green and lovely valley.

ALFRED J. BRENNER.

Pulitzer Awards

NOT even a Pulitzer Prize committee could ignore John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*. The current of progressive literature in America is running strong; it cannot be resisted by the committee which honored Booth Tarkington's *Alice Adams* and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, while it refused, for eighteen years, to recognize the poetry of a Carl Sandburg. The truth will be heard. Steinbeck's epic of the Joad migration is a powerful indictment of capitalism. Sandburg's study of Lincoln is an invigorating reminder of the democratic values which are embedded in our historical experience as a people. Both books are great because they have their origin in a deep and sincere sympathy with the aspirations of the common man. Their social meaning and their artistic expression are superbly integrated. They sum up the best work of the social literature of the thirties and point the way to the even greater tasks that face the writers of the people in the forties.

Our hopes for the future are not merely wishful. Nobody can doubt that Richard Wright's *Native Son* is as inevitable a choice for next year as *The Grapes of Wrath* was for this. The American reading public registers its gratitude to those writers who boldly proclaim the truth about American life. The Pulitzer committee is merely following the election returns.

There is little cause for enthusiasm over the other book choices of the Pulitzer committee this year. Mark Van Doren's *Collected Poems* is not a distinguished volume. The selection of Ray Stannard Baker's life of Wilson is in keeping with the efforts of reaction to revive the peace-disguised war slogans of the Wilson era. The selection of Saroyan's *Time of Your Life* merely serves as the occasion for that enormously over-estimated young man to turn on the stale and monotonous juices of publicity.

One more word: Isn't it high time that somebody started a national movement for awarding the "Distinguished Cartoon" prize to the man who has most obviously deserved it for more years than we can remember? His name is Gropper.

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Behind the Mannerheim Line

Robert Sherwood turns out a "wet squib" for the war propagandists: "conscious provocation," says Alvah Bessie . . . James Dugan reviews Garson Kanin's latest farce . . . Dance headlines.

ROBERT SHERWOOD has deprived me of a shining opportunity to prove not only that "objective" criticism (as understood by bourgeois critics) is possible in NEW MASSES, but also that I am not an unmitigated sourpuss. Granting that his dramatic defense of Mannerheim Finland (*There Shall Be No Night*, at the Alvin) is politically on the wrong side of the fence—as how could it be otherwise?—I was still prepared to admit that his play, assertedly written in the heat of righteous passion, was theatrically effective and effectively moving. Now it is my sad obligation to report that it is neither, and to contend that an art work conceived around a phony "cause" can be neither effective in its medium nor moving to its audience. (Which I might have known to begin with.)

When history's famous train made its notable curve and found the Soviet Union forced to consolidate its defenses on the Karelian isthmus, many a liberal succumbed to the power of centrifugal force. Sherwood was among them. The man who had given us the clever (if superficial) anti-war play, *Idiot's Delight*, and the moving (if clumsily constructed) *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, saw Red and sat down to knock the spots out of the Soviet Union (and, incidentally, the Nazis). There is no doubt that he is a sincere anti-fascist and that he hates the Nazis with a pure and burning passion. But he was never much of a political thinker, and his flaming indictment of the Red Army's role in Finland turns out to be a wet squib. Even the well dressed second-night audience was astonishingly apathetic.

THE PLOT

What validity of theatrical emotion there is in his play derives from the universal pathos of the destruction of a family of decent people. Dr. Kaarlo Valkonen is a Finnish Nobel Prize winner in medicine. A kindly, Christian man, he rejoices in this recognition with his American wife, Miranda, their son, Erik. Comes the war with the Soviet Union, Erik as a patriotic young Finn enlists and is killed. Dr. Valkonen, desolated by the loss of his son and convinced that he too must take his stand, enlists as a medical officer, is killed as an infantryman. His American wife is left, determined to defend her empty home with a rifle. (Please note the pointed symbolism.)

The exposition of this story is halting and episodic. The characters achieve no validity. Dr. Valkonen, his son, his older brother, his wife, the American radio commentator, Corween, talk interminably. And the doctor has some fine, brave things to say about the eter-

nal aspiration of man for progress and peace, self-knowledge and real humanity. (Much of this is quoted from the Book of Revelation.) And through him and the other characters, Mr. Sherwood offers as his considered opinions most of the lies and distortions that Mr. Hoover's Finnish Relief Fund spewed upon us. Even more. We learn, to our astonishment, that the Nazis were merely using the Red Army as their agents in Finland (without the Reds' knowing it) and Sherwood scoops the enemy press when he tells us that the last assault that smashed the Mannerheim Line was delivered, not by the Red Army, but by Nazi troops!

JINGOISM

There is more to this generally dull, unmotivated play than this amazing muddle-headedness. For the man who restated the cause of democracy in *Abe Lincoln* here indulges in some particularly vicious nationalistic patriotism—a characteristic for which his own Dr. Valkonen has the utmost contempt. There is no good word to be said for the German people (Mr. Duff Cooper, *you* are scooped!), and the American radio man speaks of the German soldiers as getting "a sexual kick" out of watching the effects of their artillery fire. There is much waving of the Finnish national flag, and more than one oblique exhortation to good old Uncle Sam to get into this mess and save the world again. The old devil-theory of history is reworked (Hitler's megalomania); and the good Dr. Valkonen's chief contribution to medical science seems to be his conviction that the world of men has gone mad and soon the sane will be in asylums while the lunatics roam the land. Well, well.

The Lunts (Alfred made up to look like Thomas Mann, and Lynn Fontanne lovely as ever) are reputed to have sacrificed a well earned vacation to do *There Shall Be No Night* immediately. They were deluded, and the sincerity of their playing, which is generally restrained and run-of-the-mill, does not lift the drama to anything more than Sherwood could achieve single-handed. For, with the minor exception noted in my third paragraph, the whole thing, to be quite genteel, stinks out loud.

But Mr. Sherwood might be interested in the only enthusiastic comment I heard in the lobby during intermission: "By God," said a heavy gentleman with a ravaged face, "this is the greatest thing that could come along right now! If only the people of this country could get wise! Only, the God damned Jews are all over the place!"

This is fitting applause for a man who

could do as conscious a job of provocation as Mr. Sherwood has done in this play, and he will have one hell of a sweet time denying that he is pleading for American intervention. In the May 1 *World-Telegram*, it is true, he has already denied it in an interview; but that same interview leads off with an attack by the playwright upon what he calls "a frightful conspiracy of silence" in Washington, and "a peace hysteria" throughout the country. "This country's voice," said Mr. Sherwood, "is the most important in the world. The hope of the future depends entirely on its influence," and while *sotto voce* he says, No, he does not want our boys to die on Europe's battlefields, with leather lungs he cries, "What about the mothers with sons in the crib who will be of military age twenty years from now? What sort of a world will they have to face then—a United States surrounded by a Wall of China; a beleaguered island fighting off all sides." In other words, Let's do it now, or as the British posters have it, "Let's Finish the Job."

Noel Coward, the British propagandist-on-leave, saw the premiere of *There Shall Be No Night*. Said he, "I can go back to Europe tomorrow." Q.E.D.

ANTI-WAR PLAY WANTED

For their next production the Brooklyn Contemporary Players want to do an anti-war play. Playwrights with a good, vigorous anti-war (not pacifist) play are invited to submit their scripts by mail or in person at the Brownsville Community Center, 381 Rockaway Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Plays are now being read by the group's production committee, but a suitable one has not yet been found. The opportunity for a new playwright to have his play produced by this group is still open.

ALVAH BESSIE.

"My Favorite Wife"

Garson Kanin directs his fifth and finest farce.

THE remarkable young director, Garson Kanin, has presented us with his fifth picture, a marvelous farce called *My Favorite Wife*. Kanin's flair for the film seems to me to be the greatest since the heyday of Rene Clair. In the development of character he is Clair's superior; in his new film, expertly written by Sam and Bella Spewack, not only Cary Grant, Irene Dunne, and Randolph Scott appear as diverse and believable individuals, but a group of smaller parts such as

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Granville Bates' fussy old judge are very rich.

The picture is pure farce, dealing with inadvertent bigamy and mistaken identity. Hollywood farce is generally approached from the naive point of view that the crazier the director, the more eccentricity, temperament, and pants-kicking that goes on under the lights, the better the picture. But farce is the most tedious of all play forms to construct, and Kanin learned his painstaking, hard-working manner from George Abbott, who is the master mechanic of applied madness. Care with the smallest detail is needed to build up authenticity. Once you know what you are doing improvisation is possible on the set. *My Favorite Wife* seems like sheer inspiration as it fizzles along, but I'll lay dough that Garson Kanin didn't come in with a hangover and think up the delicious scene where Cary Grant first sees the man who was his wife's companion for seven years on a deserted island.

The humor comes from character and situation, and the handful of straight gag stuff seems almost out of place in the film. When Donald MacBride, the puzzled hotel manager, confronts Grant to inquire why he has a bride in Suite C and wife in Suite A, he says, "Don't tell me you have a wife in B, too." That's a gag and people as real as these don't gag in moments like that.

There was some kind of plot trouble—or Hays office trouble—toward the end of the film and it finishes lamely. Otherwise and notwithstanding, *My Favorite Wife* is a wonderful picture.

One could wish that Kanin had more chance at social satire, a little of which made the department store scenes in *Bachelor Mother* so good. His only outright social theme was the unsuccessful *The Great Man Votes*, which got completely balled up because it dealt with corrupt civic politics and Hollywood would rather put the blast on mythical or at least distant political matters. Some imaginative persons might suppose the crooked politicians in *The Great Man Votes* were R-p-bl-c-ns or D-m-cr-ts, so the picture entered the realm of fantasy.

Kanin started in two years ago with the fine picture *A Man to Remember*, and since then has made four comedies. *My Favorite Wife* is the culmination of his comedy talent. Now I hope the RKO front office will feed him a social theme. He's too good a man to be typed as a farce director.

"SATURDAY'S CHILDREN"

Maxwell Anderson wrote an underdog play in 1926 about two city kids getting married on non-union wages. The play, *Saturday's Children*, asked no serious questions about society but had a certain validity in its factual and sympathetic treatment of the two people. Warner Bros. have now made it into a film, with the same title, with John Garfield and Anne Shirley as the young couple. The motives are so many years behind on the realities of life that *Saturday's Children*, compared with the general evasive level of movie themes, becomes an almost daring film. The authors

of the screenplay, Phillip and Julius Epstein, have added one commendable contemporary note by having the girl lose her job in a mail order house because of the war.

Anderson's shoddy solution of the problem, which is no solution at all, is unfortunately carried over into the picture. Faced with separation because they cannot get enough money to live together, the young people are brought together again by the attempted suicide of the girl's father whose insurance money would go to them. Garfield's role is a completely sympathetic one although he seems less colorful than in his accustomed doomed kid parts. Anne Shirley is winning and modest as the bride.

THUMBNOSE REVIEWS

Rebecca, Alfred Hitchcock's first Hollywood effort, is breaking all records at the Music Hall in New York, which should be the tip-off. If it's a British setting it will run forever at the Music Hall. The picture is very skillfully done but is no more important than a serial in *The Ladies' Home Journal*.

One Million B.C. gives the lie direct to Darwin by portraying prehistoric society as a collection of Hollywood blondes and he-men given to grunting out torch songs in their caves. If you can get in with a half string of wampum do so.

Mae West and W. C. Fields, or respectively the irresistible force and the immovable object, do their best with a lame script called *My Little Chickadee*, but you needn't go.

Strange Cargo with Clark Gable and Joan Crawford is a cross between *Rain* and *White Shadows in the South Seas*, and marks the first big retreat of the Hays office. The sex taboos are loosening up to get ready for the war.

French without Tears is the movie without excuse.

Dr. Cyclops is a technical novelty dealing with a mad scientist who shrinks the members of an African expedition down to the size of a Shirley Temple doll. If they do this one over I have a list of people I want shrunk.

JAMES DUGAN.

Mimes and Masks

April's highlights in dance technique; union for the Ballet Russe.

APRIL was the month of mimes and masks: Blanche Evan lists her work for the first time as mime (CCNY, April 7); Dvora Lapon nominates herself "Chassidic dance mime" (St. James, April 14); Margaret Severn specializes in "pirouettes" and bizarre "mask dances" (YMHA, April 21); Lotte Goslar and company presented "Dance Cartoons," under TAC sponsorship (Little Theater, April 21).

Dvora Lapon performs on a Broadway stage more out of inclination than justice. Her outstanding virtue remains sincerity, and her greatest talent charm. Margaret Severn's pro-

gram lowered the rather high batting average of Mr. Kolodney's dance series at the Y. Some years ago Miss Severn sported her masks rhythmically around the dance studios. While a ten years' growth of beard on the "bizarre masks" might have been unbecoming, it would have neatly symbolized the "modernism" at this recital.

Blanche Evan and Lotte Goslar are two dancers who obviously believe that *concise* visual and theatric communication with an audience is one of the reasons for appearing before that audience—hence, to a certain extent, their use of mime.

LOTTE GOSLAR

Lotte Goslar, a graduate *summa cum laude* of Europe's famous political cabarets, is really brilliant and funny. Her evocative portraits of all-too-human beings are etched with irony and wit as well as sympathy. The woebegone little circus dancer, the clown and his inconsequential gadgets, the prostitute and her gaudy rags, are part of a gallery of portraits which makes Goslar not only the most amusing clown in the dance field, but also a sensitive and humane artist.

The group performing with Miss Goslar needs further integration and discipline—their charm notwithstanding. Some numbers were too trivial to be dignified by a stage performance, but Goslar's uniqueness and rare talent must be increasingly recognized even by those snobs who still mumble, "that's not dance—but pantomime," *ad nauseam*.

BLANCHE EVAN

Perhaps no dancer in America today has devoted so much time and study, both intellectual and physical, to the materials and processes which go into the development of her art as Blanche Evan. While great artistry is not immediately discernible in her performances, she reveals a superior technique, a high level of craftsmanship, of individuality, and occasionally of deep feeling in her work.

Blanche Evan seems to be concentrating on evolving social portraits through dance and mime. Not all of them are successful; some are too conspicuously contrived. But her astute observation of types and what symbols characterize their existence—the realistic costume of "Woman in Need," the trick manipulation of materials in "New York Nana" or "Parasite," the sly street whistle in "Young Adolescent"—these are brilliant touches. It is in the formal elaboration of these portraits that they become obscured and lose their bite. The skillful cutting and montage which permeate the miming of Angna Enters, for instance, or Goslar, are still lacking in this younger dancer. Nevertheless, the moving psychological study "Young Adolescent" can rate high in the gallery of memorable dance portraits by our mimes.

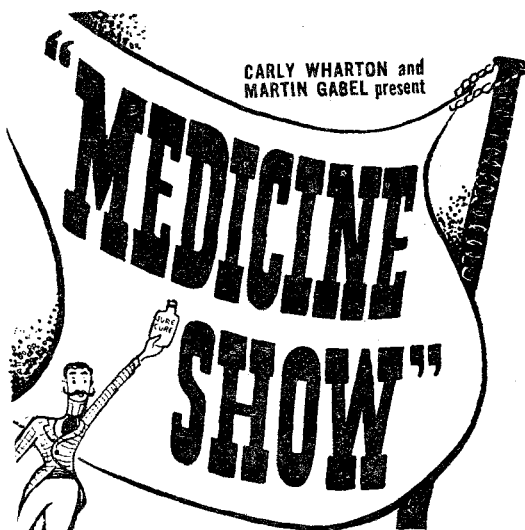
HURRAH!

The most notoriously non-union dance company in America has finally been unionized. The incorporated owners of the Ballet

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CITY AND STATE

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Russe de Monte Carlo signed a contract with AGMA after craftily trying for two seasons to evade recognition, not only of the union, but also of the fact that ballet dancers, whether foreign or native, require living salaries. With a strike threatened by the company dancers and other dancers ready and willing to throw a picketline around the Opera House on opening night, Sergei Denham, White Russian, representing Universal Art, Inc., the stockholders, yielded ungraciously to the American way of living.

FRANCIS STEUBEN.

Young America Paints

Exhibition at the Museum of Natural History.

ANYONE who has seen paintings made by Italian children recently or by Spanish children during the Spanish war will find the pictures by American youngsters at the Museum of Natural History remarkable for their peacefulness. Not only are there none of the scenes of bombing and destruction characteristic of the work from Spain, none of the regiments of soldiers and fleets of fighting planes that formed the dominant subject matter of the Italian pictures, but there is practically no evidence of any kind of conflict at all.

Unless he is interfered with, the world of a child comes through directly to the paper as he sees it, feels it, and imagines it. But it is difficult to believe that American children are as untouched by today's conflicts as these pictures indicate. Undoubtedly in the selection of the paintings to be sent here from different schools throughout the country, those which would have shown a preoccupation with the harsher realities of American life were omitted.

CHILD'S WORLD

The pictures reveal only a rather ideal world, a child's world in which he is important and happy. The world of the younger children is a world of green fields and circuses and meticulously detailed grocery stores. It is a world in which fantasy is as real as reality, a world in which snowmen go walking with their wives, houses are built of candy, where Hansel and Gretel are presented with the same directness as the girl on roller skates. The colors are clear and brilliant, the forms are broad and simple and both colors and forms are surprising in their ingenuous bravery of technique, their inventiveness and clear perception.

The horizon of the junior high school child is broader, he handles his subject matter more subtly; there is a greater cleavage between his real and imagined worlds. Technically he has made great advances. He is almost entirely concerned with the actual near-adult world. There are many fine portraits and pictures of jitterbugs, basketball players, young people studying, and men at work. The high school child has mastered some difficult techniques

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and his paintings are finished compositions.

There is surprisingly little regionalism. There are as many skyscrapers from the Midwest as there are farmyards from big cities. Negroes are portrayed as joyfully picking in the beautiful cotton fields of Missouri, Alabama, and Carolina. Identical in treatment of the same subject are pictures from Wisconsin, Ossining, and Newburgh; but there is one from Pennsylvania in which the bags (about as large as pillow cases) are thoughtfully labeled "COTTON."

There is a great deal of real visual humor; for instance, the finish at the Santa Anita track with one horse heading in the wrong direction, or the two ghosts cowering from a cocky little boy wearing a mask, or the take-off on surrealism which contains an umbrella, a can of Heinz beans, a swastika, a man's hand emerging from a bureau drawer bearing an ice cream cone and a newspaper headlined "FOO."

The theme of the exhibition is "Young America's World—Real and Ideal." But there is another kind of world shown here which is neither real nor ideal. That is the secondhand world invented by the adult as a substitute for a complex and sometimes unattractive reality. This is the world of the vacuously pretty comic-strip heroine, the Christmas card landscape, the still life of the copper vase of daffodils and the apple, its ersatz content echoed by the banality of its execution.

This third world is certainly less evident in these paintings than it was ten or twenty years ago. Fewer obstacles are being placed nowadays between the child and free, decisive expression of himself. Art teachers are learning not to teach "art." WILMA SHORE.

Hero

OUR movie reviewer came into the office this week, his usually dour countenance wreathed in smiles, and announced that he was awarding his own academy award for the best movie performance to one John Adami, 207 East 108th St., Manhattan. But how did Mr. Adami get into the movies? Well, said our gallery slave, he paid 88 cents at the Paramount Theater to see *Buck Benny Rides Again*. Unfortunately Mr. Adami couldn't see the screen because of a female hat as big as Benny's horse. "Take that basket off!" shrieked Mr. Adami. This laudable indelicacy was answered by a general attack on Mr. Adami by the lady's companions. Dozens of fellow sufferers from hat blindness sailed in on Mr. Adami's behalf and one of the crucial social struggles of our time broke out in the Paramount Theater.

Like all crusaders, Mr. Adami was haled into court for his bravery, but Magistrate Anna Kross upheld his action, saying, "There is no offense in calling a hat a basket. Most of us wear crazy hats." Our reviewer proposes a giant mass meeting to form a John Adami Society which will raid all movie houses chanting, "A tisket, a tasket, take off that awful basket!"

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